

Cornell University  
University Assembly

**U.A. Resolution # 7**

**Calling for Implementation of an Open Course  
Evaluation Working Group**

March 24, 2015

1 **Sponsored by: Matthew Battaglia, Undergraduate; Vice Chair, University Assembly**

2  
3 **On behalf of:**

4 **Joseph Fridman, Undergraduate; Undesignated-at-Large, Student Assembly**

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6 **Whereas**, the University Assembly (the “Assembly”) has the authority to examine matters which  
7 concern the welfare of a substantial segment of the campus community and may make  
8 recommendations thereon to the President or other appropriate officers of the university, and  
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10 **Whereas**, Cornell University as a whole does not offer access to information about courses  
11 beyond a general course catalog description, and  
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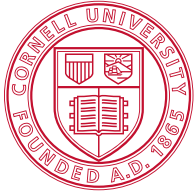
13 **Whereas**, a survey of Cornell University’s peer institutions reveals that others have successfully  
14 implemented an open course evaluation system through which students and other members of the  
15 university community enjoy access to the partial results of previous course evaluations, and  
16

17 **Whereas**, open course evaluations offer students and other members of the university  
18 community access important information about course selection, helping to guide them in  
19 academic decisions, and  
20

21 **Whereas**, this inconstancy reduces the value of course evaluations to students as they become  
22 only inward facing tools for faculty and not outward feedback to all, as students rely upon third-  
23 party sites and services to aggregate polarized and outdated reviews from unverified sources, and  
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25 **Whereas**, Student Assembly Resolution #29 was left unrealized by the University, and the  
26 Acting Provost deferred the issue back to students with the statement that course evaluations  
27 principally are a tool for the colleges, not students.  
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29 **Whereas**, valid concerns about an open course evaluation system exist and should be  
30 deliberately addressed with due consideration, and  
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32 **Whereas**, the administration requested students tackle this initiative separately with each  
33 college, and

34  
35 **Whereas**, the Student Assembly has neither the authority nor the capacity to create a efficient  
36 working group capable of bringing together officers from each applicable colleges or unit that  
37 would be able to effectively address this situation, and

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39 **Whereas**, this issue affects multiple important parts of the Cornell Community, including  
40 undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty, who utilize course evaluation feedback to  
41 improve teaching methods and course materials and is already being examined by some colleges  
42 within the university and other shared governance bodies, and

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44 **Whereas**, the University Assembly has reviewed the matter and finds Cornell University's  
45 various course evaluation systems should be reviewed and updated, therefore be it

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47 **Resolved**, the University Assembly calls upon the Provost to create and charge an Open Course  
48 Evaluation Working Group with members of each applicable academic college or academic unit  
49 for the purpose of assessing the strengths and weaknesses and Cornell's current course evaluation  
50 systems, reviewing peer institution course evaluation systems, and determining how the course  
51 evaluation system should be improved at Cornell, and

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53 **Be it Further Resolved**, that this Working Group should contain at least two members of the  
54 Student Assembly and two members from the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, and

55  
56 **Be it Finally Resolved**, that the working group report back its findings to the University  
57 Assembly no later than January 31, 2016.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**James N. Blair**  
Chair, University Assembly