



# Cornell University Employee Assembly

## **MINUTES** **Employee Assembly Meeting** **Wednesday, March 4, 2015** **12:15 -1:30pm** **401 Physical Science Building**

### **I. Call to Order**

BJ Siasoco called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m.

He explained G. Mezey is not present today.

*Present:* James Ballerstein, Bridget Cristelli, Curtis Ferguson, Tanya Grove, Hazel Hall, Steven Jenks, Eric Lee, BJ Siasoco, Pilar Thompson,

*Absent:* N. Bell, D. Brooks, L.C Howell, B. Etsy, G. Mezey, L. Morris, J. Rogan, L.

Majani, A. Mittman, M. Opperman, S. Robertson

*Also Present:* U. Smith, G. Giambattista, C. Lender

### **II. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda**

E. Lee suggested adding EA communication update to the agenda.

H. Hall suggested adding cellphone policy and mileage reduction to the agenda.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

The EA unanimously approved the minutes from March 4, 2015.

### **IV. Report from the Chair**

*None*

### **V. Business of the Day**

#### **A. Cornell Plantations (C. Thrasher-Carroll)**

C. Thrasher-Carroll says she has been at Cornell for 9½ years and has heard colleagues, especially colleagues of color, talking about why Cornell has a location on campus called The Plantations. Especially in an Ivy League institution, which also has a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation, yet have a place on campus called The Plantations. C. Thrasher-Carroll says colleagues that work in the undergraduate colleges especially in the Diversity Hosting weekend have said that both parents and students of color and nonstudents of color have expressed concern over the name. Parents express concern for the safety of their child after learning there is a place on the Cornell campus called The Plantations.

C. Thrasher-Carroll says the term The Plantation is offensive to a segment of the campus population. She says she talked to university marketing and to those in the diversity community meeting but says nothing is being done. She says she has been told various answers from it is expensive to change the name, to the argument it is just a word, and as well as the logo could not be changed because of Cornell's sesquicentennial celebration. C. Thrasher-Carroll says she wanted to bring this topic up with the EA because she thinks they can help.

C. Thrasher-Carroll says Miller (?) has come up with some different ones but it has been ignored. Man says plantations means more than just botanical garden. Woman: Marketers missed opportunity to garden good will on Cornell's campus and in Tompkins County. C. Thrasher-Carroll says she has talked to Leslie York and says she has not talked to Tracie.....C. Thrasher-Carroll says she has talked to Susan Murphy, Kent Hubbell but says no one is doing anything. Woman says there are no alumni involved with The Plantations she is wondering about the cost barrier. She asked if there is a donor looking for a naming opportunity? G. Giambattista suggests writing a resolution to the student body. Man suggests that this idea should go through the UA because they have more authority and jurisdiction. C. Thrasher-Carroll asks if she should talk to UA or do a resolution. G. Giambattista suggests a resolution. Man: says there are donors to the plantations, therefore they should be reached out to. Man says he will contact C. Thrasher-Carroll.

### **B. Transportation Meeting**

Man says guests are confirmed on March 18<sup>th</sup> Acting General Manager of TCAT. Man says they have the room in Physical Science building at the moment. It is opened up for question. Man wants to add bodies to summarize about what they do so the dialogue can be more constructive. People would want to know if TCAT is independent and how it is paid for. G. Giambattista says they should invite people in order to have more engagement and to have more responses. Man says downstairs Physical Science is their best bet. Woman says there is no room on buses and that it is difficult to get on the buses. Man says questions at the meeting should be broad. Woman asks if there is additional work done on the grant that allowed people to know where the buses were. Bridget says there needs to be funding for students.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **A. George Peter Award and Appreciation**

Committee has met and decided to award employees. Committee will continue to meet to see what they will need do. They said they already discussed how the reward is being done and what needs they need to do to determine the winner. This is an opportunity for them to go to the unit. Groups have done luncheons. Why do we do them in units? Likes the notion of enacting how wins the awards, increase the visibility of the awards itself, going into the unit, seeing people who we would not normally see on campus. Should we move away from the EA people involved? Woman says George likes when EA goes to separate unit makes the EA understand and employee makes them being understood by their unit. Bridget says individual unit gives way for lots of opportunities, people ask question and she thinks this reinforces the award because people are being recognized. Man: localized event but doing more outreach for it too. G. Giambattista says the award should be given in the big event. Bridget says when you are in the unit and your peers are seeing you being awarded then it is a group event. Award has its own

place, separate from the other awards. Woman asks what if people are not available that day? This takes away from special part of the event. By making it just another award diminishes it. Curtis suggests keeping the event local. They need more of a concrete communication plan, slideshow, pictures from the previous award would also be good. We need a reminder of who George is and what he did for the university. G. Giambattista says she think this is a good idea, something that the whole employee community should know about. But she thinks the body should think more broadly about it because right now it is very local. T. Grove says she thinks the problem is the prestigious awards and the language is not much different and they need to work with HR and tighten up the language. Man says everyone is on the same page of raising the prestige of this award.

### **B. Resolution of Appreciation**

Drafted a resolution to remove specific names. Mary is happy to participate in a luncheon for the group. The resolution says Cornell faculty and students support each other in times of need, and have compassion for staff member and compassion for the community. Man says something should be added to recognize the whole community. Woman says we need a mechanism to recognize that and that needs to be public. Woman says there was a student who was killed by a TCAT bus by Risley. Is there anything recognizing him? Man said there parents come back every 4 years and it is very touching. Woman suggests edits made by Linda by changing line 15.

## **VII. New Business**

T. Grove was asked to have the EA help with the recognition of the employees who assisted in the TCAT accident. The EA discussed different options on how best to recognize the good samaritans and will be discussing the topic more at the next meeting.

### **A. Resolution 4: Staff engagement survey plan**

T. Grove explained this resolution is stemming off of the EA Resolution created in 2011 that implemented the Staff Engagement Survey. This resolution requests the survey be conducted every five years and the EA remains a partner in the formation and implementation. T. Grove then opened up the floor for discussion on the resolution. G. Mezey voiced the concern that the resolution does not give the EA a lot of involvement and requested a clause be added so the EA so that it is given more strength revolving ownership and data for the survey. U. Smith argued the resolution seems to remove action from the EA by creating a small committee. He suggested the EA put itself as the owner of the survey and the entire ensemble handle the creation of an action plan from the data produced. L. Croll Howell added two amendments to the first and second clause so the EA would be included with M. Opperman as the owners of the survey. This will ensure the data is easily accessible to the EA in the future. T. Grove thanked the members for they're input and said she will be amending the resolution. The amended resolution will be presented at the EA meeting on March 4, 2015.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

The Employee Assembly meeting of February 18, 2015 was adjourned at 1:31 p.m. due to time.

