



# Cornell University Employee Assembly

## MINUTES Employee Assembly Meeting Wednesday, April 15, 2015 12:15 -1:30 pm 401 Physical Science Building “Being an active Voice for Cornell Staff”

### I. Call to Order

G. Mezey called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

*Present:* M. de Roos, J. Ballerstein, C. Ferguson, T. Grove, H. Hall, S. Jenks, E. Lee, G. Mezey, B. Schaffner, B. Siasoco, M. Seymour, P. Thompson

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

*Also Present:* U. Smith, G. Giambattista, A. O'Donnell, N. Doolittle, L. Majani, L. Meyerhoff, B. Capnor

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

None

### III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from March 18<sup>th</sup> were approved. The minutes from April 1<sup>st</sup> were also approved.

### IV. Business of the Day

- TND Initiatives/Policy 6.4 (U. Smith) – 15 min

G. Mezey welcomed U. Smith and gave him the floor.

U. Smith initiative is based on engagement or in other words how to include each of the assemblies in the TND process. He says he encourages people on the engagement of things, compositionally there is still a long way to go. But he says he wants to see how students are situated within the university. The engagement piece is the lived experience piece. He adds that all of the initiatives will be measurable and that there is a decrease in the initiatives required to 3 or 4 per unit. He says the initiatives will differ and they will be approved by the dean. He says what is available to all the assemblies in the initiatives are on the site and those will be publicized as well. He explains how they are evaluated, people say what they did throughout the year, how and what were the results. How was the training? That is what they would want to know. There is also a revision process, which would be going to the next round. He says there is a dashboard where all the information is posted and 101 consultation.

U. Smith says there is fun stuff that is going on, President Obama signed orders to previous legislation. The biggest one revolves around sexual orientation and gender identity. This applies to Cornell because Cornell receives federal funding. Cornell already has this in their own clause, but this will cause a change to their initiatives. U. Smith said how his office is compiling a policy

inventory one of them focuses on LGBT and the other one on disability and accessibility on campus. He says there is a spreadsheet, which can be stuff that can be changed right now, such as workplace bullying. Things people can be changed right now: having the ability to change name, accessibility presentation, adoption benefits and protection for workers abroad. Also the compensation component is to see if there are any discrepancies.

U. Smith ends by saying everybody's initiatives are due July 1st so they can be revised. He will direct people if needed.

G. Giambattista asked if the initiatives are as much for assembly as it is for the constituencies to which U. Smith says yes but the initiatives pertain more to employment than undergraduates so the list should be more important for employers. Giambattista asked if every unit and college has their own initiative. U. Smith says yes and also says they are trying to extend TND initiatives to try to include people who are not aware as well as office and units who might already have their own initiatives.

G. Mezey asks U. Smith if he can work with Eric and the executive committee to create highlights of the EA updates which happen monthly. He suggests this so that they can be more momentum from the bottom up, therefore this helps to communicate the EA message should they know what is more important to say and how to say it. U. Smith replied by saying he would be happy to help.

T. Grove asks U. Smith what pieces he is looking at and who is this impacting? U. Smith replies that this impacts mostly trans people, mostly those that are going through the transition process. If one wants to change their legal name to their preferred name than that is the conversation that he will be looking at. T. Grove explains that the name on her ID is not her legal name, therefore she states that she can help with the job at hand. U. Smith said he would like to work with her.

B. Siasoco asked U. Smith if he is the only person helping tie the initiatives together or is there people in each college doing that as well? U. Smith says there are so many meetings, where people discuss the initiatives but don't make it happen. But there is a website where all the initiatives will be uploaded so they can all be in one location. B. Siasoco also asked where is the website on the priority list, U. Smith replied that they did this Friday but it has to be approved.

B. Schaffner was worried about overlap and duplication on efforts. She wondered how many initiatives are needed. U. Smith said this is twofold: the first part is other areas of the university that could specialize in this. The second part is they want people to be aware of what is going on within their own unit.

C. Ferguson answered B. Schaffner's question by saying each semester all diversity counsels and diversity leads for each unit get together to say their goals so this reduces duplication and also helps form future goals. The last meeting was February and it was good conversation. He finds that the difficulty lies in how those that are accountable are able to spread the message within their unit. U. Smith said his office is accountable for these duplications.

- Slope Day Resolution (T. Grove with L. Sadler Meyerhoff and A. Etimhunting) – 30 min

L. Meyerhoff is concerned about the slope day performance. After last year's performance there was a lot of concern about the lyrics. The Diversity Counsel had several conversations surrounding this. Their commitment to supporting the wellness of the diverse community of Cornell was not happening during slope day. So, L. Meyerhoff wonders how do we have the conversation about this more broadly? She wonders how staff can raise their voices about their feelings (though she states not everyone has this feeling) how slope day is counter to what they are trying to achieve as a caring community. She sees the artist for this year being a repeat of last year. She wants to continue to have the community being a caring community and is wondering how to go about this while having such artists participating in slope day.

G. Mezey asks L. Meyerhoff to read the resolution. L. Meyerhoff reads the resolution.

S. Jenks asks where they can step in to make such decisions in deciding who is the respectful artist. L. Meyerhoff responds by stating that we need to be more thoughtful about the selection process. She is fine with adding a clause in the resolution about the artist signing a contract before performing.

B. Schaffner asked if there are other campus administrator groups they are already speaking with? L. Meyerhoff responds by stating that they have talked to the Student Assembly, the co-chair of the Diversity Counsel, and the SA is open to working with them and is open to having a similar resolution.

G. Giambattista has asked if anybody has spoken to the Slope Day Committee. L. Meyerhoff responds by saying they haven't because slope day is a month away so this would not be enacted until next fall. G. Giambattista says this a student event, therefore if they frame it as anything other than a student event it might be misleading. G. Mezey interjects by stating that it is a student event though it does have a community wide impact, with many people involved because people work and volunteer during Slope Day. Also alumni come back and there are resident and nonstudent tickets. L. Meyerhoff asks what would happen if the EA did not volunteer during Slope Day, would it be successful. B. Schaffner said the language of the resolution should be changed to say that it is a student event though it has a community impact. T. Grove questions if working during Slope Day is considered work place harassment because they are forced to listen to the music

P. Thompson said as a service provider having a dialogue with a committee about employee choices.

M. Seymour says she would like to change the language of the resolution to the energy in slope day is always positive to the energy in slope day strives to be positive. G. Mezey states that those requirements should be put on there so when selecting an artist there are some criteria. L. Meyerhoff brought up the point of a financial penalty if the artist breached the contract. G. Giambattista wonders if they are treading on free speech.

G. Mezey said this is a conversation they would like to move forward with, on the next meeting, and to meet offline with the Executive Committee and other interested parties to work on the language.

## **V. Report from the Chair**

None

## **VI. Old Business**

- Elections Committee Update – 10 min

G. Mezey gives the floor to C. Ferguson. C. Ferguson says that they would like to move the EA to more of a unit college model, so that the EA will become larger and have a different election process. The question is what to do now. His thoughts are to open the election for a one-year term and use next year to talk about ideas and figure out numbers and run over the model. G. Mezey wants the one-year term to be more official and have it already on the record.

P Thompson questions if one year is long enough time. G. Mezey responds by saying that they will take as much time as possible. T. Grove questions if a year from now if they will rotate the board. C. Ferguson said they have not thought about that yet. G. Mezey says that that can be completed with the charter change. He adds that next year is a big time, this year was just raising awareness but next year is when the documentation begins.

Thompson questions if the discussion is open to all throughout this decision making process.

B. Schaffner says right now they are looking at what are we going to do. June is here so that is the decision of the task force, they need a decision of what they are going to do next year. G. Mezey adds we should vote in a timeline and a procedure and Curtis should be looking at this. He says that those that are interested that they should be involved.

G. Giambattista said thanks Curtis for running the meetings. She suggests staggered terms because it is not ok to not have staggered terms.

C. Ferguson asks if people like the idea of units? Will it address people's concerns

S. Jenkins says it is a good idea because it will put pressure on the units and it will make it more likely that there will be no vacancy in the seats within the units.

G. Mezey adds that this is a direct line to the dean and to the vice president to know the goals of each unit. This is good so that next year they can build a model with dean that are friendly with the EA therefore this can allow for discussion. He asks if people have strong objections with the shortened election cycle?

T. Grove asks what model do we need to make charter change? G. Mezey answers by saying 2/3.

L. Majani questions what shortcomings they have confronted. G. Mezey said that people just don't know who to go to, because they are a large member. They are too big to represent everybody. They need to have a more focused structure. C. Ferguson answers that the committee has two focuses: more representation and participation.

## **VII. New Business**

- George Peter Update (T. Grove) – 5min

T. Grove says more of the George Peter Update will happen in June. G. Mezey says the UA will have their organizational meeting May 5<sup>th</sup> and there are two empty seats and the chair seat. U. Smith and G. Mezey have expressed interest in the empty seats therefore the chair position is still to be determined.

G. Giambattista said they are working with the UA to change their cycle so it is not at the beginning of May but during fall.

B. Schaffner counted the votes 12 voted yes 0 voted no to have U. Smith and G. Mezey fill the seats for the UA.

- Cornell Plantations Event and Updates (S. Jenks) – 5 min

B. Capnor represents The Plantation and his position is in marketing and communications. He states there was a move a decade ago but the dean at the time was strongly against it. He believes times now are different. He acknowledges the poor titles of the event A Step Back to the 1800's was a poor choice of words, but he states that their intent was for Judy's Day. He states that both Judy who orchestrates the event and himself are very upset about the title of the event. And he is here to apologize personally. He said he did not name it but takes full apologies for it. He states that they want to change the name. He also adds how he would like The Plantations to have a more diverse committee. They have renamed the name of the event today.

G. Mezey added that B. Capnor can send them something over he can put in emails if he is need of volunteers. B. Capnor thanked G. Mezey apologized that Christopher could not be here but stated that next week he will be meeting with the Diversity Council.

G. Mezey stated that they are out of time but next meeting Bridgette Brady will be there to speak of parking and transportation. He also stated that next meeting he would like to have an open forum, unless people have strong objections.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

G. Mezey adjourned the meeting at 1:33p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriela Borges

### **Future Guests:**

- Cornell Transportation (Bridgette Brady) – 5/6/2015

### **Future Events:**