



Cornell University
Employee Assembly

MINUTES
Employee Assembly
Wednesday, September 2, 2015
12:15-1:30PM

Memorial Room, Willard Straight Hall

I. Call to Order

BJ Siasoco called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

Present: M. de Roos, N. Bell, B. Esty, T. Grove, S. Jenks, B. Kepner, A. Kohut, J. Kruser, E. Lee, G. Mezey, B. Nicholson, R. Onyejuruwa, M. Pilgrim, B. Siasoco, M. Stefanski Seymour, D. Sun, P. Thompsonm,

Absent: S. Cowles, R. Onyejuruwa, M. Pilgrim

Also Present: E. Garrett, J. Loeb, U. Smith, M. Opperman

II. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda

There were no late additions to the agenda.

III. Approval of the Minutes

G. Mezey motioned to approve the minutes for August 19th, it was seconded, and the minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

IV. Business of the Day

A. Committee & Liaison Staffing

B. Siasoco said there are seats needing to be filled in the UA and G. Mezey is a returning chair for the CJC. G. Mezey explained briefly the duties of the CJC and said there needs to be a new appointee by the EA. He further explained how the meetings are Tuesday nights, but they might change this year. B. Siasoco explained how U. Smith is chair and a ranking member of the Campus Welfare Committee.

B. Siasoco explained how C. Ferguson has left the EA so there is a seat now vacant, and also S. Jenks will be leaving the EA.

B. 12:45–1:30 President Garrett and Vice President Opperman

B. Siasoco explained the memo is on the forefront of everyone's mind. He wants for everyone to give a brief introduction about themselves to President Garrett at the outset of the meeting. He then opened the floor for questions members would like to ask President Garrett when she arrives.

G. Mezey asked if anyone received feedback on the memo that was sent out. B. Esty asked when the layoffs are. P. Thompson asked why does she think we need restructuring. In general

members expressed sentiments that the feedback they heard were negative.

B. Kepner said there was a feedback stating how people were surprised about the memo because it is not the President's role it is the role of the provost. J. Kruser said the communication can be good thing but thinks the words within the memo were negative.

G. Mezey asked what the members would suggest for a better rewording next time. B. Kepner said it would be better if the members had the opportunity to see the memo they would be able to advise on some of the words. He thinks the words used in the memo have a negative connotation. P. Thompson added that even the Deans and the Directors were surprised. U. Smith said the President has experience therefore the memo did not come out of the blue. He thought it was well thought out. He felt her language is different than the previous President in terms of her language being more direct. He finds time can be better spent if they figure out how staff can be involved in discussions. J. Kruser added by saying that they needed to know her intent better from the outset therefore they can figure out what they can provide to their constituents.

B. Siasoco finished the discussion by saying that all members seem to be on the same page in terms of wanting to be a partner with the President. He then listed the questions that are going to be asked to President Garrett. J. Kruser added they need more avenues to deliver President's message and intent.

V. Report from the Chair

A. R.1 Response from President Garrett

All members introduced themselves by saying their name, the Department they are from and how many years they have been a part of the EA.

B. Siasoco started off by saying this is a chance for President Garrett to be introduced to the EA and for them to start a dialogue.

E. Garrett thanks the EA for Resolution 2 and explains what she did over the summer. She reminds the members how integral they are in terms of Cornell's academic mission. She wants to talk about the academic mission of the University and how staff is adding to that larger mission.

B. Siasoco asked E. Garrett what her objectives are for the staff of the University. E. Garrett reiterated that the staff is an integral part to the academic mission. She stated the objective of the University is to train the next generation of leaders and also to create an environment where faculty can create research that is changing the world. She stated that staff plays a role in achieving Cornell's mission and they should achieve it in a way that allows them to aim for excellence and that allows them to define higher education in the twenty-first century.

B. Siasoco then asked how staff would be involved in Cornell's planning process. E. Garrett responded by saying she feels like Cornell is quite consultative and she finds it important to speak about topics, which can be spoken about. She explained how there are some topics that

will be confidential but she then added that in all public decisions she likes to get the input of faculty, staff and students because then the product is improved. She said she finds discussion very important and staff plays an important role in those discussions she further states that it is vital to hear the opinion of those who are being affected by a new initiative once initiatives are put in place. She finds the people on the ground have the best sense of how the burden is being felt therefore she finds it important to consult staff during the planning process.

M. Stefanski Seymour asked how E. Garrett is thinking of finding input from staff. E. Garrett says M. Opperman is best to answer and then explained briefly the strategic planning process. M. Opperman goes on to explain the process, which is the standing groups. The standing groups are looking for opportunities to have sponsors to develop opportunities for brainstorming. E. Garrett said the answer to some of these issues is the processes such as the IT. She finds we need to focus on the value to what they do to students and parents in particular. She finds it best to take a service-orientated approach.

B. Siasoco then asked how E. Garrett sees the EA help voice concerns of the people to you to help provide better service. E. Garrett responded by saying that the EA is a representative body and that they are the best place for the President to get information. She finds the staff very important for evaluative judgment. M. Opperman then said that EA is what makes shared governance what it is because information is easily accessible. E. Garrett then said organization is key because you don't want redundancy. She said it is important to look at committees and see if the committees are evaluating their priority and if time is well spent.

B. Siasoco then asked how the EA could partner with E. Garrett. E. Garrett responded by saying she is optimistic and she explained her intentions on the memo. She explained the burden students and faculty have and want to focus on the burden placed on students and faculty and try to take away the unnecessary things they are asking faculty and staff to do.

B. Kepner added when his constituents read the memo they did not understand what was being written. E. Garrett said the memo was really focused and she understands that people read the memo from the prism of their own background. She hoped that EA communicates with their constituents about her intentions.

J. Kruser wanted to encourage staff as the ecosystem and where staff is located in terms of burden. He said in the past the burden has weighed on students and faculty and people expected staff to alleviate the burden. He stated that staff has had to sacrifice but that is not immediately apparent. E. Garrett replied by saying it has to do with opportunity cost and looking at it in a long-term exercise. Therefore in the long term they can forego training opportunities for staff. She encouraged staff to talk throughout constituency groups because burden is now falling on faculty. M. Opperman said they sponsor Lean Process Improvement through HR and they have 75 lean process reviews. T. Grove asked about the Lean Process and says it is rewarding. She found they need to empower the administrative assistants because that is where the disconnect is. M. Opperman said it is hard for people to buy into Lean at the beginning so that is where the leaders have to come in so people can feel trusted. M. de Roos asked about the Director report if there is a template. E. Garrett said they just have to let her know. M. Opperman said they are

going to talk about how to make the report easy but mostly what they want is what work. They don't need a long report. The point of doing this is to share what worked. E. Garrett explained they are going to use the Cornell communication team to run stories about what is happening.

G. Mezey asked what training or support are they providing to senior administrators to be able to create safe spaces because more people want to enter the conversation. E. Garrett said she is a person that likes to have everyone in the room not just the top people. She finds it important to work as a collective and to delegate. M. Opperman said she sees new creative strategies occurring through the new deans. ILR's new dean has new creative planning involving not just faculty and staff but students as well. E. Garrett explained how she is lucky to be surrounded by great leaders. She then stated it is not about the leaders but about the team.

VI. Old Business

There were no Old Business items to be discussed.

VI. Adjournment

B. Siasoco adjourned the meeting at 1:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriela Borges