



Mid-Year Report 2008-2009

Submitted by Ryan Lavin, Student Assembly President

Gorge Safety:

R. 8 Creation of an ad-hoc Gorge Safety Committee:

After conferring with Ithaca Fire Chief Brian Wilbur, City Clerk Julie Holcomb, and Gary Stewart, the Deputy Director of the Office of the Vice President for Government and Community Relations, the Student Assembly (S.A.) is assisting the city of Ithaca in addressing gorge safety issues concerning all Cornell students. The S.A. formed an Ad-Hoc Committee on Gorge Safety in an effort to positively affect the culture around gorge swimming and recreation amongst Cornell students. There will be an orientation video created by the S.A. Ad-Hoc Committee and Cornell's Vice President for University Communications Office. This video will consist of student testimonials providing first-hand accounts of injuries, dangerous activity, and deaths. The video is intended to reach all new students in the fall to provide vital information involving the hazards of the gorge areas.

PeopleSoft, Scheduler:

The S.A. has coordinated several meetings and correspondences with the University Registrar in order to relay students' issues and concerns regarding the new PeopleSoft Software system. Class registration seems to have vastly improved for the spring semester. The university worked with the S.A. and Scheduler to ensure undergraduate students' access to Scheduler services.

Academic Integrity Drafting Committee;

R. 2 Creation of an ad-hoc Academic Integrity Drafting Committee:

Our long-term objective is to create a unified honor code for all Cornell graduate and undergraduate students. Currently, the faculty has completed punitive decision-making over their students for the prosecution of academic integrity violations. We believe this is insufficient because it leads to an inconsistent standard. This fall, we started to reform the current Academic Integrity Hearing Boards by pushing to institute common standards and practices between the college hearing boards. This spring, we are working to draft a preliminary Honor Statement. The statement will be presented to the Faculty Senate for approval during their April meeting. From there, we hope to work with the Faculty next year to merge an honor statement with the Academic Code of Integrity and also work to transition the Hearing Boards to a student-run Honor Council.

Ivy Council:

During the weekend of February 6th-7th the Cornell Ivy Council Delegation, comprised of 45 student leaders, attended the ninth annual Ivy Leadership Summit at Brown University. The summit is an annual two-day conference that brings together students from all eight Ivy League institutions along with business, political and academic leaders. The theme of the conference, "Leading in a Global Community," was not only evident in the selection of speakers but also in the assortment of cultural food and performances throughout the weekend. Ambassador Charles Manatt opened the conference Friday evening, stressing the importance of improving international relations in our global community. He also emphasized the Ivy League's integral

role in world leadership to over 450 Ivy Council Delegates. Panel discussions with world political and business leaders focused on leadership in the always changing global business climate and energy practices. The weekend also launched the new Ivy Council initiative, Ivy Culture, which looks to bring various cultures closer together across the Ivy League through various programming and policy events. Members are now looking forward to next year's Ivy Summit at Yale University.

Collegetown Relations; Noise Ordinance, Collegetown Enforcement Standing Committee:

This year's orientation week and fall semester was met with a number of Collegetown related issues. The City of Ithaca stepped up its noise ordinance enforcement this year. This entailed an aggregate increase in the number of citations, an increased number of citations given out per residence, as well as increased financial penalties for offenders. This ultimately created an unfriendly environment in Collegetown between student residents and permanent residents, and between student residents and Ithaca Police officers. In an attempt to address the unfair treatment towards CU students in Collegetown and improve relations in Collegetown, S.A. leaders met with the City of Ithaca's Mayor Peterson, City Common Council Members, IPD representatives, Dean of Students Kent Hubbell, Associate Dean for Fraternity and Sorority Affairs Travis Apgar, and Gary Stewart. At this meeting a general understanding was created that recognized a decrease in noise complaints from Ithaca residents, while being paired with an increase in complaints from CU students. Alderperson Svante Myrick, CU student on the Common Council, and myself will be exploring different means to create a "Collegetown Enforcement Standing Committee." The goal of this committee is to add a peer-policing component to the controlling of noise and obstructive behavior in Collegetown while simultaneously improving relations with Ithaca law enforcement agents.

CBS at Cornell:

The S.A.'s Communications Committee and Class Councils organized and promoted an excellent CBS morning show hosted by David Price on the Arts Quad and Libe Slope.

Call 2 Action Sustainability Event:

In conjunction with Graduate Student Trustee Mike Walsh, S.A. members coordinated with student leaders from all across campus in an attempt to transform student's daily lives at Cornell into living a "Green" life. From using less power day to day, to implementing compost systems in Greek Houses and a bike share system on campus, a number of ideas and initiatives have come out of this event.

Amethyst Initiative Panel Discussion:

As the Amethyst discussion spread throughout college campuses across the country, the S.A. provided a panel of campus experts to respond to and discuss the initiative and the nation's drinking age of 21. The panel included Director of Mental Health Services at Gannett Tim Marchell, Judicial Administrator Mary Beth Grant, Director of Risk Management Allen Bova, Associate Dean of Students Travis Apgar, Director of Campus Life LeNorman Strong, Director of Residential Programs Joe Burke, Director of Cornell Dining Gail Finan, and Professor of Organizational Behavior William Sonnenstuhl.

ZimRide:

The S.A. approved the purchase of ZimRide's ride share service for Cornell's campus. ZimRide is a web based rideshare service started by Cornell alumnus John Zimmer. The ZimRide service will coordinate carpooling and ride sharing amongst undergraduates. John Zimmer is giving us a contract price that is 50% of the price ZimRide normally charges. ZimRide will cost the S.A. \$4,500 instead of \$9,000. The Department of Transportation will work with the S.A. to expand ZimRide services in order to incorporate all communities of Cornell.

Public Relations: S.A. Newsletter, Facebook Group, List-serve*R. 11a S.A. Monthly Bulletin:*

The S.A. has established a number of different Public Relations initiatives this year in an effort to further engage the student body in the shared governance system. A monthly newsletter has been created and is distributed on central campus as well as electronically to highlight recent S.A. actions. A Facebook group and voluntary list-serve was additionally created to keep undergraduates up on S.A. issues.

Elections: – Popular Election of President and Executive VP;*R. 3 2008 Undergraduate Election Rules:*

In just a couple of weeks Cornell undergraduates will be able for the first time to directly elect their S.A. President and Executive Vice President. Each S.A. Presidential candidate runs together with his or her running mate who will serve as Exec VP. There will be a total of seven presidential slates in this election, including 45 candidates running for 19 seats. To put this increase into context, in 2008 the S.A. saw 26 candidates run for 19 seats and in 2007 we saw 24 candidates run.

Transfer Student Issues: Transfer Ad-Hoc Committee, Transfer Survey:*R. 19 Transfer Ad-Hoc Committee:*

After a number of transfer student concerns have been brought to the S.A.'s attention as a result of the elimination of a transfer center on campus, an Ad-Hoc Committee on Transfer Student Issues was formed for the remainder of the semester. This committee is designed to address residential, community, academic, and advising issues currently facing transfer issues. A transfer survey has been approved by the S.A. and is to be administered through the university by the beginning of March. The committee will use the results of this survey to address transfer student issues.

Slope Day:*R. 22 Slope Day Funding:*

Given the financial constraints facing the university, Slope Day lost nearly 1/3 of its budget due to cuts from the Dean of Students Office. The S.A. leadership has worked closely with the Slope Day Programming Board Executive Board to ensure the success of the event. It is the goal and intention of the S.A. to ensure that the quality of programming on Slope Day is maintained at the same level as previous years. Through creative cuts in expenses, co-sponsorships with Cornell Concert Commission, and a potential for redirecting certain S.A. investment funds the SDPB will be able to work with a budget comparable to last year's. The potential for a redirection of certain S.A. investment funds is explained in the following excerpt from S.A.

Resolution 22:

"Five dollars per student per year shall be placed in a University endowment fund, **except the yearly investment contribution during fiscal year ending in 2009 shall be redirected to a holding account to be managed by the Appropriations Committee. This account is intended to support SDPB to an amount to be determined through further analysis of the Slope Day Budget with SDPB and the Appropriations Committee. If a contribution to SDPB is necessary all remaining funds will be invested into the endowment fund, also if no contribution is made the full value of the holding account will be invested in the endowment fund as regularly scheduled.** The Appropriations Committee shall also create guidelines for use of the endowment."

The S.A. understands the responsibility which is created from redirecting these funds, and is committed to acting in accordance with our long-term goals and charges. The amount to be redirected to the SDPB will be "need-based" and could very well result in an amount of 0 funds being redirected. The S.A. unanimously voted in favor of Resolution 22 and is committed to ensuring a similar quality of programming on Slope Day for undergraduate students.

Moratorium of New Student Groups and RSO Auditing Taskforce:

R. 21 Moratorium on New Student Groups:

The number of student groups at Cornell has increased by a substantially increasing rate. While this represents the vibrant and diverse interests that students exhibit on campus, it also creates a number of logistical and financial problems for student activities. University space, financial sources, and other resources have not been able to support this growing number of student groups and growing demand for campus events. After much discussion and debate the S.A. passed Resolution 21 calling for a moratorium on the registration of new student groups in an effort to provide a semester of review. The *RSO Auditing Taskforce* was created for the duration of this moratorium and charged to address the aforementioned issues facing student groups. Please see some excerpts of the resolution below:

Whereas, the number of student groups has grown drastically over recent years, and where a number of these groups' mission statements overlap and coincide with other groups whose purposes are particularly similar

Whereas, it is the duty of the S.A. to remain accountable and responsible for all monies garnered by the Student Activity Fee including monies allocated to registered student groups

Whereas, a moratorium on the registration of new student organizations for a period of one semester will provide an opportunity to adequately assess and audit currently registered student organizations and the method by which they are allocated funding

Be it therefore resolved, that a moratorium shall be placed on the registration of new student groups with the Student Activity Office for the spring Semester of 2009 that shall begin on Wednesday, February 4th and shall be lifted on June 1st, 2009. Registration of new student groups shall be permitted under circumstances of special need as determined by the Student Activities Office

Be it further resolved, that an RSO Auditing Task-force be established to determine the S.A.FC funding eligibility of currently registered student organizations through the S.A.O as well as develop a standard that shall be used by subsequent bodies in order to determine funding eligibility for newly registered groups in the future. The RSO Auditing Task-force shall consist of 4 members from the S.A. , including the President and the VP Finance who shall chair these meetings. The other members of the S.A. shall be elected internally. The S.A.FC shall designate 4 ex-officio members, including at least one co-chair and three commissioners who shall be designated at the discretion of the co-chairs. The Office of the Assemblies shall designate no more 1 administrator to serve as an ex-officio member. The S.A.O shall designate no more than 2 administrators to serve as ex-officio members of the RSO Auditing Task-force.

Expectations for '10-'11 & '11-'12 Student Activity Fee:

The S.A. will be adopting a set of expectations for By Line funded groups for their upcoming funding cycle applications. It is common for by line funded groups to request an increase in their Student Activity Fee allocations each subsequent 2-year funding cycle with the intention to expand their programming and activities. However, given university budget cuts and recent financial constraints we have released a set of expectations that merit a budget increase request exclusively to compensate for a decrease in funding from university departments or any other sources of revenue. The S.A. believes that this is the best way to be fiscally responsible during these difficult financial times while at the same time maintaining the quality of undergraduate student programming.

Formal Resolutions (all available online):

- R. 1 2008-2009 Standing Rules
- R. 2 Creation of an ad-hoc Academic Integrity Drafting Committee
- R. 3 2008 fall Undergraduate Election Rules
- R. 4 Charter Change Review
- R. 6 Compliance with Cornell's Statement on Diversity
- R. 7 Reprinting of Resolutions and Other Documents
- R. 8 Creation of an ad-hoc Gorge Safety Committee
- R. 9 S.A. Budget
- R. 10 Addition to the Responsibilities of the Vice President of Finance
- R. 11a S.A. Monthly Bulletin
- R. 11 S.A. Absentee Policies
- R. 12 P&T Handbook Test
- R. 13 Encourage Action in the Congo
- R. 15 Eliminate S.A.FC Late Budget Submission Policy
- R. 16 Resolution to Simplify Structure of S.A.FC Appeals
- R. 17 S.A.FC Handbook Changes
- R. 18 Supporting Cornell's New Financial Aid Policy and Calling for Increased International Student Aid
- R. 19 Transfer Ad-Hoc Committee
- R. 20 Smooth Transition of Executive Board
- R. 21 Moratorium on New Student Groups
- R. 22 Slope Day Funding
- R. 23 Appendix B Changes