



Cornell University
Student Assembly

Student Assembly End of Year Report

2011-2012

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Dear President Skorton,

On behalf of the Student Assembly please find attached the 2011-2012 end of year report.

This year the Student Assembly has seen an expansion of the services it provides- both in terms of outreach and policy initiatives. A large part of this is due to the fantastic and diverse group of individuals that make up the Assembly. Another impetus was the restructuring of how Representatives work together on issues relevant to the student body. While this end of year report is very similar to the 2011 end of semester report, the impact that past policy has had on current and future initiatives seems to reflect a continuous push from the Student Assembly to be at the forefront of issues while still maintaining a strong level of dedication to prior areas of focus or concern for the student body.

As such, as previously stated, R.11: S.A. Task Forces established Representative working groups on Student Health, Safety, Communication and Byline Funding in order to respectively address issues of mental health, high risk drinking, late night safety, changes to the SAFC and the distribution of 6 million dollars of the Student Activity Fee over two years. Each member chose one of 4 working groups to focus on. Below is a breakdown of the work done by each task force.

Student Health Task Force: John Mueller, Gregory Hoffman, Daniel Kuhr, Stephen Breedon, Geoffrey Block, Adam Gitlin, Abraham Meller, Harlan Pittell '14

The Student Health task force was led by John Mueller '13 and was focused on reducing high risk drinking. A key issue area of the student health committee was NY state medical amnesty laws. The Student Assembly passed both R.9 Off-Campus Promotion of Medical Amnesty and Resolution 36: Medical Amnesty Decal Distribution in conjunction with Gannett Health Services. Through these resolutions, the Student Assembly has distributed medical amnesty information decals all over Collegetown in order to publicize and increase awareness regarding the Medical Amnesty program.

John Mueller and Adam Gitlin '13 have also been instrumental in the Dartmouth Collaborative and are hoping to add more student voices to the Dartmouth home team. Both are leading the student health task force in the Cayuga's Watchers initiative- a peer social monitoring program that works to reduce high risk drinking by taking away the group-think philosophy of excessive drinking. Currently, John and Adam are hoping to launch a pilot program for Cayuga's Watchers next Spring.

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Safety Task Force: Anisha Chopra, Ashley Pinkney, Dara Brown, Jon Rau, Ross Gitlin, Sarah Balik, EJ Yetarian, Peter Scelfo, Don Muir, Bria Francisco '14

The safety task force was led first by Ashley Pinkney '12 and then by Anisha Chopra '13. The primary work of the safety task force was staffing the gorge safety working groups and providing feedback to the executive steering group. A final report has been made to the President and the Assembly looks forward to staffing a permanent Representative on the permanent gorge safety committee.

This Spring, Anisha Chopra, Ross Gitlin '15, Kai Keane and Katherina Balram have created a gorge safety video in conjunction with University Communications to be distributed to all undergraduates. The video has just been completed and sent off to University Communications for final review. We hope that with discussions of Nathaniel Rand's tragic death alongside the scientific reasoning behind why the undertow of the gorges are so dangerous, the video will become one of many ways to inspire safer practices within the gorges.

The year also allowed the Student Assembly and the Women's Resource Center to launch BLUE: Late Night Shuttle in order to allow students to get home safely from the libraries late at night during finals week. This Fall, BLUE took 187 students home from the library from Sunday Dec. 4 to Thursday Dec.8 during the hours of 10:30 p.m. until 2:30 a.m. This Spring, with the leadership of the Women's Resource Center's Margo Ristorucci, Dominique Thomas and Narda Terrones as well as the SA leadership of Peter Scelfo and EJ Yeterian, BLUE ran from May 4th- May 11th and had another increase in ridership with 215 students using the service over 4 days. BLUE has also been approved for the 2012-2014 byline funding cycle and will run for five weeks during the year around prelim and exam times through the services provided by the Cornell University Transportation Department.

Communication and Outreach Task Force: Nathaniel Trefeissen, Mohit Gulrajani, Ulysses Smith, Erin Szulman, Adam Wolford, Jennifer Kay, Dan Goldberg

This year, the Student Assembly has adopted a new mentality and made a tremendous effort to move in a different direction. In past years, the SA has waited for the student body to come and present SA members with issues. While there have been a number of great initiatives that have come from this approach, the members this year felt that the student body would be

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better served if the assembly made an effort to reach out to them. Thus, the SA created the position of Vice President of Outreach, led in the Fall by Ulysses Smith '13 and in the Spring by Nathaniel Trieffesen '12 to coordinate this effort. As co-chair of the Communication and Outreach Task Force with Mohit Gulrajani '12, the task force made great strides throughout the semester to bring the SA to the student body.

Overall, individual SA members put and participated in many outreach events for their constituencies:

- *BSU Block Party (9/3/2011)*,
- *Greek-LGBTQ Informational Seminar (9/5/2011)*
- *Arts & Sciences Ice Cream Social (9/21/2011)*
- *Chalk It Up! (11/7/2011)*
- *The 2015 Scene (11/28/2011)*
- *AIDS Awareness Week (11/28-12/2/2011)*
- *CALS Cider Social (11/30/2011)*
- *Transfer Meet & Greet (11/30/2011)*
- *Hotelie Houses for the Holidays (11/30/2011)*
- *Fair Trade Chocolate for Feedback: A Sweet Exchange (12/1/2011)*
- *AAP Holiday Potluck (12/6/2011)*
- *Black Student United Black History Month Events (2/2012)*
- *Asia Night 2012: Ignite the Night (3/3/2012)*
- *626 Thurston Lunch Series*

Besides the formal outreach initiatives, the fourth annual Cornell Caring Community Celebration (C4) consumed the main part of the Spring Semester. This event, created as a preemptive attempt to address student stress and mental health while establishing a presence to show the large student community on campus. C4 was co-sponsored by groups within with the themes of mental and physical health, diversity, and sustainability. These groups included: Cornell Minds Matters, Cornell University EMS, EARS, Cornell Health International, LGBT Resource Center, Women's Resource Center, Greek Tri-Council, Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives and Big Red Bikes (just to name a few). On April 17th, 2012 hundreds of students came to Ho Plaza to relax, interact with fellow students and to learn about the many different student resources here on campus that are available for any student undergoing mental health or stress problems.

Finally, the Task Force also worked on the new SA website cornellsa.com. The site chronicles each outreach event and has blog updates from SA members about different initiatives that they are working on throughout the year.

Byline and SAFC Task Force: Adam Nicoletti '12, Roneal Desai '13

Being one of the smallest task forces, Roneal Desai worked closely with the Student Assembly Finance Commission while Adam Nicoletti chaired the SA Appropriations Committee. Over the Fall semester the task force helped to pass numerous resolutions. R.4 Distribution of SAFC Funding Guide to Student Organizations put the funding process for student organizations in layman's terms. R.19 Fall 2011 SAFC Appeals recommended that the SAFC did not err in funding rationales for the DDR Club, the Cornell Christian Fellowship, and the Sabor Latino Dance Ensemble. Additionally, as seen in a previous report, the SA passed R. 34 2012-2014 Byline Funding Proposal summarizing the Byline funding distribution proposal approved by the President and the Board of Trustees in January.

This Spring there were many additional initiatives taken on by the Byline/SAFC task force which include:

I. Appendix B Changes

In Resolution 40: Appendix B 2012-2014 changes to appendix B were passed April 5th 2012 by a vote of 21-0. Some highlights include:

- Class Council now has autonomy in allocating its byline funding distribution over the four classes, due to identified differences in need by class year.
- All Community Center Funds shall be directed towards North Campus based programming (as per Community Center Council's request).
- The SA will not impose a cap on HAVEN's Filthy Gorgeous Dance due to HAVEN's responsible spending of the Student Activity Fee and its own request for financial autonomy.
- Slope Media (a new byline funded group) shall provide annual durable goods reports to the Appropriations Committee.
- Undergraduates shall not be charged for Slope Day by Slope Day Programming Board without express permission from the SA.

II. Umbrella Programming Fund

The Byline/SAFC task force helped to implement the Umbrella Programming Fund (UPF) (see: Resolution 39: Charter for the Umbrella Programming Fund). In the Fall, the UPF was created in an attempt to provide more stable and consistent funding to large umbrella organizations that had been receiving funds from ALANA and the SAFC for many years but felt as if their needs were not being properly addressed. The proposal came to fruition as the Cornell Asian Pacific Students Union was applying for byline funding- an issue we had talked about at length and tried to navigate to make sure that the Student Activity Fee did not start to become bifurcated as more student groups began to apply. While CAPSU ultimately did not receive funding, the UPF was approved by the Student Assembly and was extended to provide a direct source of funding for not only CAPSU but also La Asociacion Latina, Black Students United, and the Native American Students Association.

The allocations of each of the four multicultural organizations which will make up the \$2.25 Umbrella Programming Fund portion of the 2012-2014 Student Activity Fee (taken from the increase of the same amount given to ALANA during the Fall Byline cycle for this very purpose) were finalized on April 21st, 2012. The UPF Committee, which comprised of two members from each of the aforementioned umbrella organizations along with two members from ALANA, decided that of the \$2.25, \$0.59 (26%) would go to Black Students United, \$0.72 (32%) would go the Cornell Asian Pacific Students Union, \$0.52 (23%) would go to La Asociacion Latina, and the remaining \$0.43 (19%) would go to the Native American Students Association at Cornell.

These allocations were decided upon by a metric that the committee felt would most equitably divide the available funds. The committee ended up deciding on taking 70% of the funds and splitting them evenly among the four groups, and taking the remaining 30% and dividing it in two halves-- one based on past spending figures and the other half based on on-campus demographic information.

While there is a lot of tough work ahead of the SA, the four groups along with the SA and ALANA are continuing to meet so that we may learn about each other's communities and how our resources can be pooled towards helping one another and addressing many race related issues on campus. The SA looks forward to its continual work with Dr. Renee Alexander and

for the future conversations regarding diversity that are much needed on this campus.

III. Changes to the SAFC

Finally, the SAFC/Byline task force worked very closely with the SAFC leadership to reconstruct the SAFC funding process. In Resolution 42: Proposed Changes to the SAFC Guidelines in a response to the shortage of funding for student groups in the Fall of 2011, the SAFC will now be enacting:

- A tier system: In response to decreasing caps, the SAFC will be assigning groups into tiers based on their spending history for the past 4 years. Each tier will have its own tier cap.
- Tier movement: Groups will be able to move tiers based on (1) how much of their allocation they spend and (2) how much of their tier cap is spent.
- Performance tiers: The highest tier (Tier 1) will have additional criteria that groups will have to meet. The SAFC will evaluate eligible groups based on membership, honors and recognition, event attendance, unique contribution to campus, and accessibility. No groups will be placed into Tier 1 until Fall 2013.
- Decreased documentation: Much of the documentation groups have to submit has been removed to make the process easier for presidents and treasurers.
- Goal: The goal of the tiered system is to solve the instability in caps for the foreseeable future by reducing unspent funds and ensuring that groups which demonstrate a higher need for funding can access it.

Resolution 42, after being discussed at three SA meetings with the purpose of emphasizing community dialogue and feedback, was passed by a unanimous vote of 22-0. With this new tiered funding system in place for Fall 2012, the SAFC and the SA hope to allocate more money with less waste to the growing number of SAFC funded groups. For more information about the changes please go to:
<http://www.cornellsa.com/funding-2/>

Student Recommendations for the new University Calendar:

Much of the Spring semester was focused on the changes to the University Calendar and mass student discontent with what was finally proposed. The SA passed two resolutions regarding the University Calendar: Resolution 43: Student

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Assembly Recommendations for the new University Calendar as well as Resolution 47: Undergraduate Student Body Denouncement of the Calendar Committee's Proposal. We appreciate the administration's support and understanding of our concerns and issues and appreciate the time taken to recognize our thoughts.

Our feedback was solicited by the Provost and the Dean of Students about our thoughts on the calendar passed by the Faculty Senate. Below are the thoughts (put together by Assembly leadership) on the final calendar.

In the Fall of 2010, the University Calendar Committee was founded to determine whether changes to the Academic Calendar would be beneficial, primarily, in reducing student mental health. After nearly two years of work, in May 2010, the Faculty Senate passed the recommendations of the Calendar Committee. This memo is purposed with succinctly expressing undergraduate student's displeasure with parts of the proposed calendar, the reasoning behind the discontent, and solutions we believe can create a calendar that all parties are interested in.

COMMON AREAS OF AGREEMENT

1. Wednesday of Thanksgiving off for break

- a. Many students take this day off and it has always been seen as a very much optional day of instruction. The student body fully supports the removal of class from this previously half day of instruction

2. A break between the start of Spring Semester and Spring Break

- a. The Spring semester is no doubt a time of significant difficulties. Many students have recently been introduced to Greek life, the pressure of finding summer employment is increasing and the weather is, to be nice, not the best. Having a break in between the start of the semester and spring break allows students the time to catch up on assignments and classes they are behind in and allows students to have time to de-tress. Students would be happy with either a one or two day break, depending on what the final calendar will allow

AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

1. Shortening of study period

- a. While the Committee frames this change as simply a "two-thirds of a day" reduction in Study Period, it essentially cuts an entire day of studying. The change would move exams from starting at 7pm on the first day to 9am, essentially eliminating the entire day as a day of study for most students. This hurts students as they have less time to

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prepare for their exams and we worry student stress will increase with the decrease in time to study

2. Loss of a Natural Break in the Calendar in the Spring Semester Exam Schedule

- a. Currently, Saturday and Sunday provide a natural break in the exam period, with only one period of language examination on Saturday and no exams on Sunday. With the proposed calendar, students gain a Friday off as a reserved day for studying, but Saturday and Sunday are opened up for one period each of General examination. Essentially, the weekend is lost as a previously reserved time for studying for most students. We perceive this change as a potential harm to changes aligning with improving student mental health

3. Starting Exams on a Monday

- a. With exams starting on a Monday, students are less able to access the resources of TA's and professors who may not be available during the weekend. While Thursday and Friday are technically study days, most students take the first day or two of study period as rest days to have some relaxation before the start of the most stressful period of the year. Many professors are not on campus during the weekend and are thus unavailable to assist students, In the current schedule, by starting exams on a Wednesday, students have the final Monday and Tuesday before exams to access professors and TA's, which can greatly improve students knowledge and confidence on a particular subject matter

4. Elimination of a majority of Senior Week

SUGGESTIONS

1. Starting the Spring Semester a half week earlier
 - a. We certainly respect the faculty's distaste for half-weeks. They disrupt the typical learning calendar and are not optimal for educational purposes. By starting a half week earlier, and eliminating the half week of classes at the end of the semester, no half weeks are added to the calendar. In addition, we gain two extra days to work with at the end of the semester, and can start exams on a Wednesday, eliminating the problems described above with starting exams on a Monday and having study week be partly over a weekend.
2. Elimination from a two-day MLK break to a one-day MLK break
 - a. The sudden introduction of MLK day as a University holiday disrupted the planning of a calendar that maximized student mental health. But if the administration is set on keeping this day as a

holiday, there is really no reason why that Tuesday must also be a day off. The Committee gave the reason that individuals shouldn't have to travel on MLK day, but we feel this is a weak argument, especially as this has never been a holiday before and the fact that we are now adding it as a holiday is no reason to add *another* day of university holiday afterward. By eliminating this second day of holiday, we can have another day to add to the exam period/Senior Week, which will improve student mental health.

3. Adding A Day Back to Senior Days

a. The Committee was created to reorganize the calendar to improve student mental health. While we lament the elimination of a long-standing Cornell tradition, we are more concerned with the stress put on Seniors. Under the proposed calendar, Seniors are expected to be able to say their good-byes, prepare for leaving campus (such as packing up, arranging move-out with landlords, paying their bursar bills) in 2 days as exams end on Tuesday and parents generally arrive either Thursday or Friday. Our hope is that Senior Days is changed to have four full days of programming (as opposed to the seven that it is currently) so that the Monday-Thursday of Senior Week is still preserved in order to keep both tradition and to reduce stress but shortened enough so that much of the high risk activity is curbed.

Resolutions regarding Oversight on the Ithaca Campus:

With changes to the median grade postings, the Assembly drafted R.2 Adding a Student Seat to the Education Policy Committee. While the EPC has agreed that student representation should be on the committee there has yet to be any action on our mutually agreed upon Resolution. We hope to see a student on the Committee as soon as possible.

After many students asked Cornell University Police Department to review their response protocols, Chief Zoner co-sponsored R.13 CUPD Response Protocol Review and came to multiple Assembly meetings to explain clearly the guidelines that her department must follow when identifying suspects without bias.

As the Africana Studies Department appointed a search committee chair that had a troubled history, the SA passed R.22 Reevaluating the Appointment of Grant Farred as Chair of Africana Faculty Search Committee in the hopes that future appointments to very public positions are made with considerations to prior offensive allegations.

R.17 Smoking Habits & Behavior Referendum is meant to start a conversation about the feasibility of passing smoking bans on campus in the interests of all those living, working and breathing within the vicinity. This is intended to be an ongoing initiative with input from the other Assemblies as the dialogue progresses.

While it may be a running joke among the SA to keep proposing R.24 Garbage Cans on North Campus, the impetus is no laughing matter. Over the years Freshmen Representatives have noticed the need to put more trashcans on North Campus yet it is very difficult to do so. As the University moves towards being 'greener' every year, Peter Scelfo '15 and Ross Gitlin '15 have finally worked with facilities and grounds management to right this problem. There are now three new trashcans on North campus.

Resolution 41: Advocate for the Prevention of Sexual Violence in IFC houses by Endorsing Wingman101 was a jointly sponsored Resolution by Women's Issues Committee representative Dara Brown '13 as well as students from Panhellenic, the Interfraternity Council and Gannett Health Services. In an attempt to address sexual assault and harassment more concretely in the Greek system the Resolution endorses Wingman101 by supporting the sending of an email to IFC Presidents to increase awareness of the Wingman101 Program.

After working with the University Registrar, Resolution 45: Student Assembly Support of a Tiered CUID Replacement System supports a tiered pricing system, based on an increasing set amount for how many times the student loses their CUID. The first i.d. will hopefully be free while the subsequent costs of replacing further i.ds will be capped jointly and responsibly by the University Registrar and the Student Assembly.

Finally, with a look to the University's "Towards New Destination's" Policy, Resolution 46: Student Assembly Input on the University Diversity Council recommends that there is a student representative on the UDC, that the University starts tracking some groups not normally perceived as a "protected class" (such as the LGBTQ community, Veteran Status, etc) and that the UDC considers composition, engagement, inclusion and achievement as four broad categories in which to solicit student input.

External Resolutions that Impact those On and Off Campus:

The Fall Semester was an exciting time for the student voice to be heard. One such instance was the work put in by many Assembly members regarding the New York Tech Campus initiative. Through R.7 Creating the S.A. NYC Tech Campus Ad-hoc Committee and R.16 Announcing Student Support for the NYC Tech Campus I am proud to note that Representatives such as Erin Szulman '12, Geoffrey Block '14,

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Anisha Chopra '13 and Ross Gitlin '15 were integral in heralding student support for the new campus.

Another fantastic and impactful initiative was R.12 Request to Email Owego Volunteer Response to Undergraduates spearheaded by Student Trustee Alex Bores '13 and Roneal Desai '13. By sending an email from the SA to all undergraduate students, 900 volunteers participated in service trips to Owego, NY. I went on one such trip, as did many Assembly members including Dara Brown '13 and Adam Gitlin '13, and the positive feedback from residents and volunteer coordinators alike was heartwarming.

Additionally, because the SAFC Fall '11 allocations were capped much lower this semester than many sports teams had expected, Dan Goldberg '14 and Tom Hayford '12 drafted R.23 Creating the Club Sports Ad-hoc Committee. Through this ad-hoc committee they created a "hand-guide" to help club sports fundraise, are working on a "sports club hub" website and are working with the Athletics Department to improve access to facility reservations. The Club Sports Council will very much be up and running in the Fall of 2012.

The SA in a joint Resolution with the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly unanimously passed Resolution 35: Designation of Student-Elected Trustee Seats in order to recommend that the Board of Trustees permanently adopts the designation of one undergraduate seat and one graduate professional seat on the Board.

Finally, the Student Assembly has helped to create the Collegetown Student Working Group in which members of the Cornell undergraduate community, the Student Assembly, the Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Council are all working with the Mayor of Ithaca and the Ithaca Common Council to address issues of fire safety, landlord-tenant relations and community building in Collegetown. The Committee hopes to address many short and long term issues that arise in Collegetown and to have a group of students looking out for the interests of those living in Collegetown. While the working group was formed in Spring '12, the real work of the committee will be starting over the Summer and in the Fall of 2012.

On a personal note, I am so proud of all that the Student Assembly has done this year. By covering all aspects of campus life and by working with a wide range of fantastic administrators and faculty, this has been a year that the Assembly, as well as myself, have truly grown. We appreciate all of the help and guidance you and your administration have done for us and thank you for all of your open dialogue and discussion throughout the year. We look forward to working with you next year and for many years to come!

Best,

Natalie Raps

President, Student Assembly

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