

Minutes – October 16, 2014
Cornell University Student Assembly
4:45pm – 6:30pm, Willard Straight Hall Memorial Room

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

S. Balik called the meeting to order at 4:50pm.

Members present: S. Ali Khan, B. Bacharach, S. Balik, J. Batista, Y. Bhandari, W. Bitsky, B. Brown, M. Chak, J. Fridman, R. Gademsky, L. Goldman, M. Henderson, G. Kaufman, V. Kejariwal, D. Li, E. Liu, R. Raglin, M. Stefanko, S. Tayal, P. Titcomb, D. Vakili, L. Wershaw, F. Yang, A. Zhou

Members excused: L. Liu, M. Masson

Members unexcused: E. Johnston

II. Approval of the October 9, 2014 Minutes

Minutes approved by unanimous consent

III. Open Microphone

None

IV. Announcements/Reports

Reminder for Internal Elections – M. Henderson

Reminder that internal elections will be held after the meeting.

Breaking Bread Outreach Announcement – S. Tayal

Forum for international students to interact with each other, to be held in the Memorial Room.

Outreach Announcement – Y. Bhandari

Reminder to the SA members to fulfill their outreach requirements

Organizational Spotlight (Cornell University Sustainable Design) – L. Wershaw

The purpose of the spotlight is to recognize one of Cornell's organizations for exceptional work. This month's spotlight goes to Cornell University Sustainable Design for their work regarding sustainable energy.

V. Business of the Day

R. 19: Improve Lighting & Fix Walkway on Libe Slope – S. Ali Khan and D. Vakili

J. Fridman mentioned that he was emailed over Fall Break regarding support for the resolution, and that is a good sign for the resolution.

J. Batista asked how progress will move past the resolution. Response: they'll be working with walking tours and the engineering department to farther action.

Call to question, seconded, approved by a vote of 24-0-0. (SA Vote: 22-0-0. Community Vote: 4-0-0, contributes 2-0-0 to the total).

VI. New Business

R.16: Recommendation Concerning Study Week – J. Fridman

There's been trend of study week shortening over the past 2 years. Based on some rudimentary research through the Sun, it would appear that an overwhelming student concern against shortening study week was voted down. Petitions have been circulated, and the amount of signatures provided for those is higher than the amount of voters in the SA elections. Clearly it is an issue of concern for the student body.

S. Tayal recommends gathering empirical numbers to farther support the resolution when it is brought to higher bodies.

M. Stefanko asked how this resolution would differ from previous ones that have tried and failed to accomplish the same thing. Response: He is unsure what arguments are against the resolution, so he is hesitant to outline any sort of tactic. If the resolution is passed, he will talk to the appropriate bodies.

M. Battaglia asked where the tradeoff would be if study week were to be extended. Response: He's not certain how the logistics of everything work, but he would advocate for not trading off with any holidays.

D. Vakili expressed his support for the resolution. He is involved with CUTonight that provides funding for events planned during the study period, which is more difficult due to the shortening. Also, this Fall has seen two calendar changes (first day of class on Wednesday instead of Tuesday, full Wednesday off to start Thanksgiving break versus half day), and the tradeoff between increasing days off and decreasing social events.

M. Chak asked if this resolution would affect the calendar this year. Response: Unsure, but would take change as soon as it's available.

Motion to move to Business of the Day, seconded, approved by a vote of 23-0-0.

M. Henderson mentioned that VP Susan Murphy has stated that other universities in the area have short study periods, and that this is more of a culture change that students would be accustomed to in a couple years. Response: He has also heard an argument that a shortened study period might incentivize students to take a lighter course load, which seems like a backwards argument. And the proposed culture change seems like it limits Cornell's motto: Any student, any study.

R. Raglin asked if any hard number was in mind for the length of study week. Response: Nothing particular in mind, but a good start would be getting back the day that was taken away.

V. Kejariwal mentioned that he was actually in support of a shorter study week. As an international student he already has his flights booked, students have the entire semester to prepare, and there are schools that are worse off.

S. Ali Khan asked what J. Fridman's strategy would be going forward. Response: It is important to point out the misfeasance of the administration regarding this issue and the disconnect between them and the students.

Gina Giambattista recommended inviting members of the administration to the SA meeting to talk about their reasoning so that the SA has a better idea of how to move forward.

Max Weisbrod commented that the SA should protect its charge of the academic calendar.

A. Zhou mentioned that currently study breaks are organized as a 4 day period and a study day. He recommended that if a day were to be added to the break that it be attached to the day and not the period.

M. Battaglia mentioned that there are definitely students that would not find "trading" February break for study break to be ideal. Also, what was the administration's response to the previous resolutions regarding this issue? Response: Trading is not ideal, but it might come down to a comparison of marginal benefit. He would direct the question of the administration to the Daily Sun columns.

S. Tayal said that the resolution is meant to represent the student opinion and not to suggest implementation details that should be left to the responsibility of the administration.

E. Liu mentioned that the argument to extend study period for social events goes against the period dedicated to study. Students should learn how to handle stress and time management. Also, international students are in a hurry to go home and they would prefer to leave sooner rather than later.

D. Li mentioned that February break is the Spring parallel of Fall break, which would be desired for spring transfers. She felt the resolution should be passed as soon as possible, but it might be worth holding off until it is more clear how February break would play its part.

D. Bacharach mentioned that having an extra study day versus a break day makes more sense from an academic standpoint, which one would think the administration would be in support of.

Call to question, seconded, approved by a vote of 19-5-0 (SA Vote: 18-4-0. Community vote: 2-2-0, contributes 1-1-0 to the total)

R.20: Recognition of AIDS Awareness Week – J. Batista and Alexander Brown

Created in 2011 by Haven, SA, and Hillel to support cross community programming for events that would raise awareness of AIDS. This resolution is brought to the SA yearly to emphasize its importance. They are talking to infected disease doctors in the area to see if they would be willing to provide a panel. Also reaching out to organizations that have not participated in the past.

Motion to move to Business of the Day, seconded, approved by unanimous consent

Motion to amend: Add 'ad-hoc' before AIDS in line 44, **seconded, approved by 20-0-0.**

J. Fridman asked what the AS could do to help. Response: In the past, the SA has given out red ribbons during the week to get involved and open dialogue.

P. Titcomb expressed his full support for the resolution and wanted to ensure that the week also address the social stigma of the disease as well as the medical and biological effects.

M. Stefanko mentioned that the SA should consider creating a more sustainable model for this event.

S. Ali Khan asked why the same legislative effort isn't put into other issues of similar nature. Response: This event in particular is highlighted as the SA had a part in its creation. It is also a prime example of the large cross-campus effort to express support.

Call to question, seconded, dissent expressed (want to make an amendment). Vote to vote: 0-20-0, back to discussion.

Motion to amend: Change the 'Be It Finally Resolved' clause to 'Be It Therefore Resolved' and to add "Be It Finally Resolved, the SA would provide annual support for AIDS week".

S. Tayal mentioned that the resolution states that an ad-hoc committee is to be made, which would have to go through the SA yearly anyway.

M. Stefanko said that it would be more prudent to create a sustainable model rather than add a line to this resolution as it may get lost in the shuffle later on.

Call to question on the first amendment (changing 'Be It Finally Resolved' clause to 'Be It Therefore Resolved'), **seconded, failed by a vote of 1-18-0.**

Call to question on the second amendment, seconded, failed by a vote of 3-17-0.

Call to question on the resolution, seconded, approved by a vote of 21-0-0.

S. Balik adjourned the meeting at 6:24pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chelsea Cheng