

Cornell Convocation

Byline Funding Review

2015

LETTER OF INTENT

TO:

Matthew Stefanko
Student Assembly, Vice President of Finance
109 Day Hall

FROM:

Cornell Convocation
Willard Straight Hall

Dear Vice President Stefanko,

In accordance with the instructions set forth by the Student Assembly, We have compiled this application complete with an overview of the organization and budget break downs from the past three academic years, as well as projected budgets. Included in these breakdowns are individual expenses and all revenues.

Convocation is a subset of Class Councils, a unit of the Office of the Dean of Students and receives the entirety of its budget from the Student Activity Fee from undergraduate students. Convocation is operated by and completely comprised of Cornell University students. The purpose of Convocation is to provide the campus and general community with a year end large scale speaker who would be free to listen to for all.

Cornellians are seeking a prominent Convocation speaker that will instill pride with their parting words, which they will hold with them the rest of their lives. In the past, Convocation has brought nationally popular and widely sought after speakers. We hope to continue creating a sustainable program that will serve Cornellians for years to come.

Sincerely,

Zachary Benfanti
Chair, 2016 Convocation Committee

Matthew Baumel
Chair, 2017 Convocation Committee

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Cornell University Convocation committee is to foster a sense of unity and pride within the graduating class by selecting and sponsoring a speaker to address the class during Commencement Weekend. The speaker shall instill a sense of unity and shall be selected to appeal to the diverse nature of our campus community.

ORGANIZATIONAL BIOGRAPHY, HISTORY, OFFICERS

Senior Convocation has a complex and rich history. Born as a student initiated program over 25 years ago, Senior Convocation has evolved from a small supplemental student program to a university event that draws thousands of parents, families, friends and graduates each year.

In 2001, the senior class adopted the Convocation Medallion, an award that recognizes an individual for their meaningful contributions, success in instilling the desire to learn and dedication to undergraduate achievement and excellence. Support from the University for Senior Convocation has been very encouraging. As the demand and expectations for the program grow, the university has partnered with students to provide an environment and avenue to select, coordinate and support a plethora of speakers.

Throughout the last 8-9 years, the University President and his senior staff have assisted with inviting speakers, producing the event and providing financial support. For many years, Barton Hall was center stage for a speaker to address the graduating students and their guests the day before graduation. In 2004, President William Jefferson Clinton was our speaker and the demand for the event necessitated the relocation of the event from Barton Hall (capacity 5,500) to the university stadium. As a result, the expectations from students, families and our community increased.

In 2005 we held the event back in Barton Hall with overflowing crowds and a hard to manage situation. The estimated attendance for that event was over 7,000 with several hundred people waiting outside the doors for entry. This situation forced us to consider moving the event outdoors for future years.

With the assistance from the VP of Student and Academic Services, we were able to accommodate a larger crowd in 2006 estimated between 10,000 and 15,000 in attendance by having the event in the stadium. Unfortunately, the support from the administration has been under scrutiny due to the economic stress and realigning of university priorities. To secure the outcome of future successful convocations, students must increase and stabilize the funding for this program.

We realize that obtaining top choice speakers will require a substantial increase in our allocation each cycle and we are hopeful to continue partnering with the administration to make offers that are more competitive and attractive.

The Convocation Committee is typically convened in the fall of a class's junior year. The committee is made up of juniors who will be on the Senior Class Council and juniors who will serve in the Student Assembly. This committee has ranged in size over time.

2016 Convocation Committee Members

Andrew Greener	Brandon Tenzer	Lindsay Wershaw
Samantha Kaplan	Ryan Enderby	Eve Buseck
Juliana Batista	Adam Mills	Victor Biguma
Ian Sigalow	Aaron Weinstein	Monica Cai
William Bitsky	Frederick Turner	Daniela Cardenas
Justine Brennan	Clark Zhang	Emma Johnston
Carlton Burrell	Kristen Niedrach	Oluwatoniloba Oni
Rhiana Gademsky	Lisa Awaitey	Alexa Salazar
Matthew Henderson	Kayo Shonibare	Robert Raglin
Jevan Hutson	Arun Chakravorty	Brian James Murphy
Garrison Lovely	Ian Freiman	David Vakili
John Lowry	Charles Jordan	Ayisha McHugh
Evan Schlossman	Connor Riser	Liselle Pires
Matthew Stefanko	Chaila Fraundorfer	Spencer Nord
Laci Taylor	Danielle Kellner	Noah Tulsy
Ashley Estrada	Ian Harris	Tucker Iida
Mai-Lee Picard	James Stults	Emma Boudreau
Iyore Olaye	Melissa Giangrande	

2017 Convocation Committee Members

TBD over the course of the next couple weeks

CORNELL UNIVERSITY CLASS COUNCILS CONSTITUTION
APPENDIX A
SENIOR CLASS COUNCIL CHAIRS AND COMMITTEES

ARTICLE 1.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

Section 1. Eligibility

- Applicants must be a member of the Junior Class at time of selection.
- Applicants must be available on campus throughout the entirety of their term in office in order to fulfill their duties.

Section 2. Requirements

- All chairpersons are required to attend their respective Class Council meetings immediately after the selection process.
- All chairpersons are required to attend their respective Class Council events and be active members (as outlined in Article III) for the entirety of their term in office.
- All committees are required to give an update of their respective committee's progress at Class Council meetings.
- All chairpersons are required to submit any incurred expenses, with receipts, or revenues collected to the Vice President of Finance. This should be done within 24 hours of its occurrence.

DUTIES OF CONVOCATION CHAIR

- Convene a meeting of Class representatives to serve as a Selection Committee. This committee is to be comprised of: All active members of Class Council at the time the committee is formed, elected members on the Student Assembly at the time the committee is formed and those fifteen members selected by the Convocation Chair and Class President.
- Other individuals may be appointed by the Dean of Students or the Vice President for Student and Academic Services with consultation of the Convocation Chair.
- Invite, via email, members of the class to be part of the Convocation committee.
- Fifteen members from the class will be selected by the Convocation Chair and Class President, from the pool who show intent by responding to the emailed invitation.
- Selection of these fifteen members from the class will be based on representing the diverse interests of the class. The selection process shall be transparent to all members of the Cornell community, with the Convocation Chair and Class President directly accountable for those selected.

· The Selection Committee meetings shall be conducted in confidentiality and any member of the committee who breaches this confidentiality shall be removed from the committee.

· Responsible for organizing the Convocation Ceremony, including the following:

- o Working with the Selection Committee to establish a list of potential speakers and make initial contacts with agents during the fall semester of Junior year.

- o Confirm with the Special Events office that a room at the Statler Hotel has been reserved for the Convocation speaker.

- o Have a confirmed acceptance of our invitation by the end of Junior year to insure a speaker for Convocation.

- o After the speaker has been confirmed, make reservations and travel arrangements for his/her arrival.

- o Work closely with the Vice President for Publicity and the Cornell News Service to ensure timely, accurate, and adequate publicity of the ceremony and biographical information on the speaker.

- o Make arrangements for a breakfast with the speaker and a news conference before Convocation for just the Executive Board and the speaker, as well as, a reception following Convocation for the speaker, the Class Council, the

Selection Committee, their families, and invited guests (appropriate administrators and faculty based on the speaker.)

- o Make all arrangements for the speaker after Convocation until his/her departure.

- o Send a personal thank you to the speaker after Convocation from the Class Council.

- o Make a reservation for next year's Convocation Reception.

PAST CONVOCATION SPEAKERS

- 2015: Gabrielle Giffords and Mark Kelly
- 2014: Ed Helms
- 2013: Cory Booker, Mayor of Newark, NJ
- 2012: Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City
- 2011: Rudy Giuliani, Former Mayor of New York City
- 2010: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives
- 2009: David Plouffe, Campaign Manager
- 2008: Maya Angelou, poet
- 2007: Soledad O'Brien, newscaster
- 2006: Martin Luther King the III
- 2005: General Wesley Clark
- 2004: President Bill Clinton
- 2003: James Carville, political strategist
- 2002: Danny Glover, actor and human rights activist
- 2001: Janet Reno '60, former US Attorney General
- 2000: US Senator Charles E. Schumer
- 1999: Samuel (Sandy) Berger '67, national security advisor
- 1998: Keith Olbermann '79, sports/newscaster
- 1997: Dr. Bertice Berry, TV personality
- 1996: Robert Kennedy, Jr., environmental lawyer
- 1995: Morris Dees, chief trial lawyer for the Southern Poverty Law
- 1994: Dr. Mae Jenninson, M.D., '81, astronaut
- 1993: Matthew Ruff '87, novelist
- 1992: Geraldine Ferraro, first woman nominated for US Vice President
- 1991: David Drinkwater, former Cornell University Dean of Students
- 1990: Kenneth Blanchard '61
- 1989: Ambassador Sol Linowitz '38
- 1988: Dr. Joyce Brothers '47
- 1987: Mario Cuomo, New York Governor
- 1986: US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan
- 1985: Stephen H Weiss & Kenneth Williams

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The Cornell Convocation Committees formally request continued Byline Funding for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years. It is imperative that we receive more support from the students, and hence Convocation is requesting an allocation of \$14.50 per undergraduate student. In accordance with the instructions set forth by the Student Assembly, we have compiled this application complete with an overview of the organization and budget breakdowns from the past three academic years, as well as projected budgets. Included in these breakdowns are individual expenses and all revenues.

Convocation is a subset of Class Councils, a unit of the Office of the Dean of Students and receives the entirety of its budget from the Student Activity Fee from undergraduate students. Convocation is operated by and completely comprises of Cornell University students. The purpose of Convocation is to provide the campus and general community with a year end, large-scale speaker who would be free to listen to for all.

We are requesting an increase of \$2.00 per student to be able to obtain the caliber of speaker that the students of Cornell University want to see speak their graduation weekend. This increase will allow Convocation to extend more offers and stay competitive with the level of speakers other top universities are securing. Cornellians are seeking a prominent Convocation speaker that will instill pride with their parting words which they will hold with them the rest of their lives.

In the past, Convocation has brought nationally popular and widely-sought out speakers, and with increased funding we hope to create a sustainable program that will benefit Cornellians for years to come.

**ANALYSIS OF AY2015-2016 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
SHOWING HYPOTHETICAL SPENDING ON EACH
BUDGET ITEM IN AN ORGANIZATION'S FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS IF THE ORGANIZATION RECEIVED 10%,
25%, AND 35% LESS FUNDING THAN ITS CURRENT
ALLOCATION**

Simply put, by examining the AY2015-2016 financial statements, showing the hypothetical spending on each budget item in the event that our organization received 10%, 25%, or 35% less funding—we would not be able to uphold and maintain the standard and tradition of Convocation that has come to be the expectation here at Cornell for the past decade or so since our relocation from Barton to Schoellkopf.

The reality of the matter is that we are severely underfunded as it stands, and even a 10% funding will not allow us to execute accordingly with what Convocation seeks to do and the reach that it can have on generations of Cornellians.

In order to stay competitive amongst a growing field of competitive candidates for speakers that are targeted by other prestigious Ivy League institutions, \$100,000 just scrapes the service for what Convocation can offer. For us to take the next step in our development and maximize our potential (and subsequently target elite speakers), this increase is crucial for the upcoming byline cycle.

APPENDIX A: Challenges Facing Cornell Convocation

SPEAKER

Will Ferrell (150K)

Bill Gates (200K)

Tina Fey (125-150K)

Morgan Freeman (85-100K)

Stephen Colbert (100K)

Bono (250K)

JK Rowling (150K)

Anderson Cooper (100-125K)

Tom Hanks (100-150K)

Al Gore (150K)

Colin Powell (125-150K)

Robert Downey Jr (200K+)

Neil Patrick Harris (100-150K)

Daila Lama (Producing over 100K)

Oprah Winfrey (200K)

Steven Spielberg (100K+)

Additional Challenges:

- Ithaca (remote)
- Memorial Day Weekend
- No Honorary Degrees
- Not speaking at “Graduation”