



Minutes
University Assembly
Tuesday, April 22, 2014
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
G10 Biotech

I. Call to Order

J. Blair called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: R. Adessa, S. Balik, J. Blair, R. Booker, D. Bunck, J. Burns, M. Dumas, E. Loew, M. Lukasiewicz, C. McGrath, G. Mezey, A. Moore, G. Ruizcalderon, B. Schaffner, U. Smith, R. Wayne

Absent: N. LaCelle

Others Present: B. Kuo, D. Howe (by phone), K. Page, G. Giambattista, A. O'Donnell

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 8, 2014 meeting were approved unanimously.

III. Reports from Assemblies

Student Assembly

U. Smith informed UA Members that at the most recent Student Assembly (SA) meeting an ad hoc group of students took over the meeting so little business was achieved. Moving on to upcoming meetings, the SA will be finalizing plans for their endowment. The funds are to be used for an infrastructure fund.

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

M. Dumas reported the GPSA held internal elections to select a new executive board. They also met with President Skorton and spoke about the disparities in upcoming changes to teaching assistant and research assistant pay.

Employee Assembly

G. Mezey reported the EA met with President Skorton and VP Opperman to discuss the evolution of higher education.

Faculty Senate

J. Burns reported the Faculty Senate approved the title Professor of the Practice and is now looking into adding another title, Research Professor.

IV. Committee Updates

Executive Committee

J. Blair reminded the chairs of the standing committees that annual reports are due to him by May 6. Also, he noted that the final meeting of the UA would be held on May 6. Internal elections and final business will be taken care of at this meeting.

Campus Infrastructure Committee

G. Ruizcalderon reported that the committee spent its time working on R14, to be voted on at this meeting. They worked to address the contention in the issue to the best of their ability.

Campus Welfare Committee

A. Moore reminded the UA of discussions in December about the campus climate study. The study has since been released.

Codes and Judicial Committee

There was no report.

Policy Advisory Group Liaison

There was no report.

V. Old Business

Final Comments, Discussion, and Voting on Resolution 10: Investigating an Open Access Policy for Cornell

D. Bunck gave a brief summary of this resolution. It has been previously introduced and discussed. Reading of the resolution was waived. D. Bunck noted that the resolution received only one public comment. The comment was from the Library Board in support of the resolution. The Assembly voted on the resolution. The resolution was adopted with a vote of 15-0-1.

Final Comments, Discussion, and Voting on Resolution 11: Towards New Destinations and Cornell's Campus Climate

A. Moore gave a brief summary of the resolution, noting that it follows up on a discussion from December. Reading of the resolution was waived. The resolution received no comments during the public posting period. The Assembly adopted the resolution with a vote of 15-0-1.

Final Comments, Discussion, and Voting on Resolution 12: Updated Resolution to Modify Campus Code to Clarify the Rights of Complainants to Appeal Summary Decision Agreements

G. Mezey briefly summarized this resolution and recounted the history of its previous drafts. Reading of the resolution was waived. The resolution received no comments during the public posting period. The Assembly adopted the resolution with a vote of 15-0-1.

Final Comments, Discussion, and Voting on Resolution 13: Updated Resolution to Transfer Title IX Cases to Cornell University Policy 6.4

G. Mezey briefly summarized the resolution. It alters footnotes in the code to direct readers to Policy 6.4 where necessary. Reading of the resolution was waived. The resolution received no comments during the public posting period. The Assembly adopted the resolution with a vote of 15-0-1.

Final Comments, Discussion, and Voting on Resolution 14: Addressing the TCAT Deficit

G. Ruizcalderon offered the background information and history behind this resolution. B. Kuo joined him to remind the UA of the pertinent data and history of Cornell's relationship with TCAT. In recent years, TCAT has seen its ridership grow but has also found that the majority of this growth is accounted for with the free passes. G. Ruizcalderon said the CIC looked at other solutions, but a more workable one could not be found. For example, raising the cost of the current passes to \$300 would require that 70% of buyers remain. Additionally, they were not comfortable asking other riders to subsidize the first year students. They also decided that retaining free night and weekend service was important due to safety concerns. Reading of the resolution was waived.

G. Ruizcalderon asked the Assembly to approve an amendment to replace \$700,000 with \$500,000 for accuracy. This was approved without dissent. He noted that the decision made in the resolution is not one that is especially favorable in his view, but something will be done to generate the required funds and this is the Assembly's chance to have some say in the matter.

G. Mezey asked what the consequences of this resolution would be. Specifically, he was concerned that overall riders would decrease and cause a reduction in state and federal aid. He worried this would solve one budget gap and create another. B. Kuo said this was difficult to accurately predict, but he is confident that under the policy suggested in the resolution, Cornell would be able to meet its one-dollar per ride commitment. G. Ruizcalderon specified that the feasibility study considered freshmen buying passes at the rate sophomores do.

B. Schaffner asked about the one-dollar figure for the cost of one ride. She noted that heavily used routes on campus must realize a lower cost on a per rider basis as a result of the relatively fixed cost of operating a bus. B. Kuo responded saying the mark was set as a benchmark that was equivalent to Cornell meeting its financial commitment to TCAT. Changing this amount would be the business of the TCAT board. He noted Cornell continues to invest three to four million dollars annually into TCAT.

Next, members of the public in attendance shared their thoughts.

One audience member asked the UA to consider UAW and TCAT workers and the impact a significant loss in revenue or ridership might have in their future ability to come to fair collective bargaining agreements. G. Ruizcalderon said there would be no decrease in TCAT revenues under this plan.

The next audience member stated that no matter how the Assembly acts, the free bus passes would be rescinded. So, the Assembly should not be complicit with the

administration's actions. This person suggested additional TCAT funding through a student fee set by the SA and GPSA. U. Smith noted that there is a limit to the amount by which the student fees can be raised. Raising both fees to their limits would not cover the amount needed.

The next audience member presented comparisons with other institutions. She noted, however, that the main reason to support the free passes was safety. Acknowledging that nights and weekends would remain free, she expressed concern that freshmen will not readily learn the TCAT system without the free usage and that the ultimate result of removing free passes for first year students would be an increase in the number of people walking about in the very late night hours. B. Kuo responded to her comparisons with other institutions by noting that most of these other universities offer a shuttle service and not a full transit system. Cornell's involvement provides a great benefit to the surrounding community. He also recounted the process Cornell participated in during the 1990s that resulted in the consolidation of three area transit services into TCAT.

The next audience member expressed concern that the UA was being used by the university administration to rubber stamp predefined decisions and to deflect negative comments. G. Ruizcalderon interjected that, when faced with this issue, he strongly suggested Cornell pay for the difference. He also noted that he was not given any predetermined solution by the administration.

The next audience member recounted the Redbud Woods incident that led to the free passes. He hoped the Assembly would remember this history when making a decision.

An audience member from the Residential Programs Office noted that, in the context of Cornell Days, it is important to remember that the free bus pass is a major selling point presented to accepted students.

The next audience member represented the Cornell Cooperative Extension. He read a statement and noted that eliminating the free first year pass would be in opposition to Cornell's commitment to decrease carbon emissions.

The next audience member to speak was a member of the Student Assembly. He stated he would not support the resolutions because many of the possible consequences have not been properly considered.

A motion to extend the meeting 30 minutes was approved.

University Assembly members were given an opportunity to contribute a second round of comments.

R. Booker noted TCAT is a service used by students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. It is the only affordable means for many staff members to commute. He stressed the need for a long-term solution. He suggested that students work together to create a viable plan that maintains an acceptable level of service for a sustainable cost.

M. Lukasiewicz wondered when the reduction in aid would become a problem. B. Kuo did not have an exact answer to this but suggested looking at the rate of pass purchasing just before the free pass program began.

U. Smith stated the university must be able to afford this. There are numerous places from which funds could be diverted and numerous pressing student life issues toward which they should be diverted.

G. Mezey asked what would happen if this resolution did not pass. J. Blair responded saying facilities would have to make a decision. He would suggest forming a special committee to meet with the Provost if this were to occur.

G. Mezey next asked if raising the cost of parking passes had been considered. Alternatively, he suggested first year students pay a fraction of the \$200 bus pass price. B. Kuo stated that the parking pass costs around \$700 so meeting the required “take rate” would be much more difficult than for the bus pass.

D. Bunck noted that this issue was introduced in January. He felt there might not have been ample time to fully discuss a solution. G. Ruizcalderon said a decision must be made before the next academic year.

S. Balik made a motion to amend the resolution. She wished to change the word “unable” to “unwilling” in an effort to reflect Cornell’s ability to pay despite their statements otherwise. She also proposed that the resolution ask to negotiate a new agreement with TCAT.

G. Mezey said that despite the complexity of the university’s business, the Assembly should not pass a resolution edited or otherwise that does not properly address the university’s commitments in a manner acceptable to the UA and its constituents. Instead, the Assembly should work to uphold such commitments by asking the university to pay the price associated with them if they are as important as stated.

S. Balik’s amendments were defeated.

R. Wayne proposed an amendment that would alter the resolution to request that Cornell increase its subsidies to meet the deficit. There was discussion of how to proceed regarding interim and long-term solutions. E. Loew said that the main issue the Assembly faces is not knowing how spending priorities are set.

U. Smith added a protection to R. Wayne’s amendment that prevents the administration from removing other services already provided. R. Wayne agreed to add this. The amendment was approved.

S. Balik proposed amending the annual meeting requirement to ask for more frequent meetings attended by interested community members. She also noted that the final three whereas clauses were no longer relevant.

G. Mezey called the question on S. Balik's amendment. The amendment was approved 12-0-3.

G. Mezey then called the question on the amended resolution. The resolution was approved 12-0-3.

A motion to extend the meeting 5 minutes was approved.

VI. New Business

Introduction of Resolution 16: Carbon Neutrality and Divestment

J. Blair introduced a resolution that reflects the probable sense of the body based on an email straw poll. The resolution supports carbon neutrality but advises against divestment. The Assembly voted to bring this resolution to the floor for debate and disposition at the next meeting. This resolution will also be posted for at least seven days for public comment.

Introduction of Resolution 17: Recognition of Outstanding Support to the AY 2014 Legislative Session

J. Blair introduced this resolution. It thanks all the visitors and supporters of the Assembly for their time and effort. The Assembly voted to bring this resolution to the floor for debate and disposition at the next meeting.

VII. Adjournment

J. Blair announced the last meeting of the UA would be held on May 6, 2014. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Noah Wegener
Assemblies Clerk