

Minutes
University Assembly
March 24th, 2015
4:30pm - 6:00pm
401 Physical Science Bldg.

I. Call to Order

J. Blair called the meeting to order at 4:34 P.M.

Attendance:

Present: S. Balik, J. Barnett, J. Batista, M. Battaglia, J. Bergfalk, J. Blair, R. Booker, J. Burns, M. Hatch, E. Johnston, N. La Celle, R. Walroth, R. Wayne

Absent: R. Adessa, C. Best, E. Loew, C. McGrath, G. Mezey

Others Present: V. Bhaya, J. Fridman, G. Giambattista, M. Indimine, J. Malina, A. Minikus, A. Olofin, L. Schill, D. Skorton, S. Wolf

Call for Late Additions to the Agenda

No late items were requested.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of March 10, 2015 were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Abbreviated Updates

Executive Committee & Constituent Assembly Updates

M. Battaglia said that the UA received a letter from President Skorton reappointing Charles Walcott as the University Ombudsman, as well as a letter from Skorton for reconfirmation of Mary Beth Grant as Judicial Administrator. Both Walcott and Grant will be appointed for two more year if confirmed. Battaglia also congratulated the winners of the Undergraduate direct University Assembly (UA) elections—Matthew Battaglia and Matthew Indimine were elected to serve next year.

R. Walroth said that he will be leaving Ithaca for April and May, so he will be stepping down as ranking member. The graduate and professional students met and have nominated C. Best to take his place as ranking member on the UA Executive Committee for the remainder of the term. The Members present approved the change by unanimous consent.

R. Booker reported that the Faculty Senate discussed the implementation of various budget cuts. He also stated that a resolution about faculty and staff participating in meetings outside of regular hours was approved.

IV. Business of the Day

Confirmation of A. Olofin to serve as the AY 2016 Judicial Codes Counselor

S. Balik motioned to approve the appointment of Adebola Olofin to serve as Judicial Codes Counselor (JCC) beginning in the academic year 2016. Balik's motion was seconded by Randy Wayne, Chair of the Codes and Judicial Committee (CJC).

Balik said that the committee that chose Olofin received about 30 applications for the position, and the entire committee then narrowed down the candidates from four to one. She stated that it was a very selective process and that Olofin is very academically qualified and involved in various facets of the Law School.

Blair asked if there were any further questions, of which there were none. The motion to approve the appointment of Adebola Olofin to serve as the Judicial Codes Counselor for Academic Year 2016 was carried by a vote of 9-0-0.

For Vote: UA Resolution #5: Support for the Office of the University Ombudsman

J. Blair said Resolution #5 was introduced at the last meeting. M. Battaglia motioned to bring the Resolution to a vote. J. Bergfalk seconded the motion.

Battaglia said that the Resolution is for the creation and funding for a full-time Assistant Ombudsman position in the Ombudsman's Office. This office has seen a large increase in visitors and the sponsor believes that they can better serve the community if they receive an additional full-time position.

Blair noted that the University does not object to the appointment of a new Assistant Ombudsman, subject to the availability of funds, which is up to President Skorton.

UA Resolution #5 was approved by a vote of 8-0-1.

For Vote: UA Resolution #7: Calling for Implementation of an Open Course Evaluation System

J. Batista seconded M. Battaglia's motion to bring Resolution #7 to the floor. Battaglia stated that this Resolution calls for a working group of all relevant academic entities to discuss the creation of an Open Course Evaluation system. J. Blair asked if there were any questions from the members.

R. Walroth said that the title of the resolution seems to call for the implementation of an Open Course Evaluation as opposed to the creation of working group to investigate it. Fridman proposed to change the words "Evaluation System" to "Working Group" in the title. By unanimous consent, the title was changed to "Calling for Implementation of an Open Course Evaluation Working Group."

J. Batista said an explanation of the process they have been through as well as what has happened with Student Assembly (SA) Resolution # 29 would be helpful to the members of the UA. J. Fridman said SA Resolution #29 was passed in the fall but deferred multiple times. He said the University already has a system like the one they are aiming for in the CALS,

Engineering, and Hotel schools. The original proposal is to bring forward a working group to discuss this for all stakeholders.

The Resolution was approved by a vote of 12-0-0.

For Introduction: UA Resolution #9: Community Bill of Rights Resolution & UA Resolution #10: Charge of the Community Rights and Responsibilities Working Group

S. Balik motioned to bring UA Resolution #9 to the floor. J. Batista seconded her motion.

Batista said that the JCC office and members of the Student Assembly were talking about how to establish a Community Bill of Rights so that everyone on campus can understand their rights and responsibilities. The process that they underwent included discussions in all the Assemblies. Resolution #9 empowers the CJC to create, maintain and make available a Community Bill of Rights.

Resolution #10 suggests that under the CJC, a Community Rights and Responsibilities working group will be formed. The working group will draft the Bill of Rights and will also be responsible for convening in order to discuss how to make policies more consistent and congruent. Resolution #10 also calls for a website where all University codes and policies can live. S. Balik reminded everyone that they want to establish this role through the CJC and empower groups of people to work on it together, and that they were not necessarily discussing what the Community Bill of Rights would contain.

R. Booker asked if they knew what they have to include in the Bill of Rights. S. Balik said the SA passed Resolution #79 in 2011, and it was essentially a Bill of Rights, but it was a Student Bill of Rights, not a Community Bill of Rights for students, staff, and faculty. The Resolution was passed by the SA, conveyed to President Skorton, and it is unknown if a response was received by Skorton. Balik said that it is up to the working group to propose appendices, such as how to clarify policies regarding Cornell University Police Department.

J. Blair said he intends to ask the JCC, JA, Office of University Counsel, EA, GPSA and SA if they want to provide comments to the Assembly ostensibly at the April 7 meeting, depending on when they take up Resolution #6. He asked if there were any other comments or questions. S. Balik asked if Blair would open up the resolutions for public comment before April 7. Blair said he would put them up on the University website as early as the next day if the members did not object.

M. Battaglia said Resolution #10 line 28 says “committee” and asked if it should say “working group.” J. Fridman responded by saying the line was written as such because a working group is a type of committee.

R. Booker said he thinks this process would be relatively difficult, as anything anyone says or writes will have to be run by many departments and offices. S. Balik gave her response time to A. Minikus. Minikus said that they will try to initially extrapolate from existing policy, like Academic Freedom, and take some of the language that has already been passed. Once they have a document created in the future, they can start getting more specific, but right now the goal

is to put something on paper that is simple.

J. Blair said he will send out the resolutions to all the stakeholders the following day and see what their responses will be. J. Fridman said that he thinks the resolutions are within their powers and capabilities.

J. Blair asked for unanimous consent to accept R9 and R10 with the intention of being brought to the floor at a future meeting for disposition. There were no objections.

J. Blair said that President Skorton is running a few minutes late, and asked to deviate from the Agenda and bring forward UA Resolution #8. N. La Celle motioned to bring this resolution to the floor, and Booker seconded the motion.

For Introduction: UA Resolution #8: Updating the Campus Planning Committee Charter in the UA Bylaws

N. La Celle said that he talked to leaders of the Campus Planning Committee about the disparity of language between the Campus Planning Committee Charter and the UA Bylaws. He wants to get the language consistent across all applicable organizations. J. Blair clarified that the Campus Planning Committee is an associate committee of the UA, so they have to approve the charter, and so does the UA. Currently, the words are not exactly the same and they have been out of sync for over a year. The Campus Planning Committee has worked hard on this for several months, and they want to bring it forward for a vote to their committee on March 26. The UA is introducing this Resolution with the intent to vote on it at a later date, presumably April 7, so the UA can update their bylaws after the Campus Planning Committee approves an update to their charter. Blair asked for unanimous consent to accept UA Resolution #8 for introduction and for disposition at a future meeting. Members agreed.

President Skorton's Final Address to the University Assembly

J. Blair welcomed President Skorton for his final visit. Skorton said the last time going to all of the various Assemblies is an emotional time. In looking at the database that Gina Giambattista and her colleagues developed, the shared governance groups (Employee Assembly, Faculty Senate, UA, etc.) have sent over 750 resolutions in the time he has been president. In a qualitative sense, many of the resolutions were approved or acknowledged right off the bat. A smaller number are turned down, sometimes multiple times. In between that, there are many that remain in process for a while. One conclusion that Skorton wanted to share is that in the University's transition to a new president and new provost there is perhaps an opportunity for all the shared governance groups, but particularly the UA, to help everyone keep a better track of what everyone is working on.

Skorton's second suggestion was that, for every resolution that comes to his office, there are many that are not brought to resolution. Overall, the system has been functioning as it was designed, but he thinks that shared governance should share things that have been discussed or that are coming up for consideration. He also said that Chairs of the Assemblies do have a lot of communication, but it can be increased.

Another suggestion was that it might be helpful to have a more local element of discussion for certain issues—not instead of centralized input, but in addition to.

His last suggestion was that it would be productive for the campus community in general to talk to each other about issues, and like governance groups talked directly to each other. In addition to the UA, it would be good to foster more direct conversation between shared governance groups. Skorton said he appreciates the directness of his conversations with the UA and the honesty with which they agree or disagree with his actions. He said that he hopes that candor will continue and, if it does, he believes it will make the transition smoother for President-elect Garrett.

Skorton asked if there were any questions.

M. Battaglia asked if there was anything specific he would like to see the Assemblies tackle. Skorton said he does not think it is right for him to suggest which issues to tackle, but he thinks they should focus on things that are almost fully resolved. Conversely, if there are issues that will have long-term ramifications, he thinks it is fair to ask Garrett right away. With others, they may present her with issues where she needs to understand the campus culture first. He thinks it is important to reach out to her from the UA's perspective to explain what the UA is, because every campus is a little bit different. Skorton said he was comfortable with the UA telling her how things can be better.

S. Wolf asked what the mechanism was to get on Garrett's calendar. Skorton said to contact Lisa's office or even him because President-elect Garrett will most likely not be on campus between now and July 1.

J. Bergfalk asked what more they can do to communicate the importance of divestment of fossil fuels to the trustees. Skorton commended Bergfalk for questioning things on an analytical, mathematical basis. He said that there are three somewhat separable considerations regarding this issue: the first has to do with the societal importance; the second would be the effectiveness of such a maneuver on the things trying to be influenced; the third would be its affect on the University. Skorton's only concern with divestment was his uncertainty about its effect on the University's finances. Bergfalk asked if the trustees are talking about it. Skorton said yes. S. Wolf said that Skorton created an ad hoc committee on integrating sustainability commitments into the Cornell endowment 7 years ago, and that the report has not been widely distributed. Skorton said it was meant to be an attempt to talk about principles. He asked J. Malina to provide a copy to the UA Chair.

J. Fridman said shared governance is composed of many stakeholders, but there are many oppositions. He asked Skorton what advice he would give to Garrett about handling shared governance.

Skorton said that it is important for Garrett to develop her own approach with shared governance groups, rather than feeling constrained by him. He hopes some traditions will continue like the president coming to these meetings. Discussion should occur between the people you are representing and you. Skorton's final point was that he thinks the University lacks something by

having all shared governance groups at the central level, as units are different from one another.

J. Blair announced that Martin Hatch brought President Skorton a gift on their behalf; Hatch presented the gift to Skorton. Skorton said it means a lot to him, and that we still have 100 days to get things done.

Campus Planner Update

J. Blair introduced Professor Wolf and L. Schill.

S. Wolf said he is very interested in campus governance. The Campus Planning Committee is a house of information for people who have a stake in development. On the other hand, the Campus Planning Committee is a governance mechanism by which the University and different constituencies hold the University accountable for development and decision-making. Wolf thinks the Office is staffed properly. He said that they have created a subcommittee that has come up with very minor modifications to their charge. Ned La Celle has become the liaison between the UA and Campus Planning Committee. Wolf said that with Leslie Schill's help, they are now for the first time formalizing the way amendments are making changes to the Campus Plan. Campus Planning Committee is pretty well attended, but often members are ex-officio members; as Campus Planning Committee is an organ of governance, Assembly representatives should also be involved. G. Giambattista said that to make sure each of the different constituent assemblies has seats filled, she and Wolf can work together.

M. Hatch asked how much Campus Planning Committee has learned about the financing of construction. S. Wolf said the Committee has no veto power, and can only take a position for or against. Wolf said that people who do not have a vested interest in development serve on the Campus Planning Committee.

L. Schill said they are charged with stewarding the Campus Master Plan. The Master Plan is a living document that they make sure is flexible. Recently, they have accomplished a complete street on Tower Road, made it a multimodal transportation route, and brought in some green infrastructure. Tower Garden will be completely renovated this summer. The Wayfinding Plan intends to enhance the visitor experience and improve navigation.

J. Blair said that President Skorton talked about less new buildings and more maintenance. Many constituents are concerned about budget and tuition increases as well as about how the Master Plan is integrated. Regarding Assembly attendance at CPC meetings, he said the CPC does not meet at a regular time which is very hard for people to plan around. He suggested that if they could not commit to a 'first Tuesday of every month' type of scheme that they should at least publish a meeting calendar in advance so that people could plan to attend.

Blair thanked them for their time. He asked to extend the meeting nominally up to 15 min.

For Introduction: UA Resolution #6: Divestment from Companies producing Fossil Fuels and Holding Fossil Fuel Reserves

Blair informed members that he has a conflict of interest related to divestment, as he was the sponsor of last year's Resolution that was passed by the Assembly. For the issue of divestment,

he transferred the gavel to Chair Pro Tem Matthew Battaglia.

M. Hatch said he simply wanted the Assembly to accept the introduction of Resolution #6. There were no questions.

Discussion regarding potential adoption of Special Rules of Order regarding the debate of UA Resolution #6

M. Hatch said that he has had many conversations about this resolution by email.

J. Bergfalk said he is open to either April 7 or April 21 for consideration of Resolution #6, but his feeling about the Rules of Order will be different in each context. M. Hatch said he agrees with the openness of the conversation. R. Booker said the Assembly does not need to hear the administration's argument for or against the Resolution if they have enough information. He does not think this is as controversial as members of the committee think.

J. Blair said his concern with not hearing the University before voting on the Resolution is that it undermines what they are going to potentially say to the trustees.

M. Hatch motioned to entertain the Resolution on the 7th of April. G. Giambattista asked when this will be open for public comment. M. Battaglia said Hatch's motion, which has been seconded, is to postpone resolution for disposition and consideration until April 7, which would provide for comments starting tomorrow. M. Hatch proposed April 7 as the date on which the Resolution should be considered—there were members opposed.

Hatch then proposed postponing the resolution to April 21. By a vote of 8-0-1, the Resolution was set to be disposed of on April 21.

G. Giambattista said that limiting public comment to written-only would exclude part of the community that would not be able to participate.

M. Battaglia requested to adopt a two-minute speaking time for members on the 21st in addition to one hour for the actual debate. J. Blair motioned to limit speeches/comments from members and, if allowed, the external community, to two minutes per individual when the debate comes to the floor. The motion was seconded. By a vote of 8-0-0, the debate on April 21 will be limited to two minutes for those who speak in the Question/Answer part after the main presenters.

V. Late Additions to the Agenda

There were no late additions to the Agenda.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Vishal Bhaya
Assemblies Clerk