



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly
Minutes of the June 19, 2019 Meeting
12:15-1:30 PM
WSH Art Gallery

I. **Call to Order & Roll Call**

- a. A. Howell called the order to meeting at 12:15pm.
- b. *Members Present:* K. Barth, A. Brooks, M. Benda, T. Chams, J. Cooley, H. Depew, B. Fortenberry, B. Goodell, A. Haenlin-Mott, D. Hiner, A. Howell, J. Kruser, R. Lochner, K. LoParco, K. Mahoney, A. McCabe, J. Michael, C. Sanzone, H. Sheldon, A. Sieverding, K. Supron, L. Taylor, C. Wiggers, J. Withers
- c. *Members Absent:* E. Miller
- d. *Also Present:* J. Sager

II. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. Motion to approve the minutes of the EA meeting of May 15, 2019; January 16, 2019; and December 5, 2018 – all **approved** with no dissent

III. **Business of the Day**

- a. Remarks from the Chair
 - i. Chair Howell welcomed the committee and introduced himself. He is a Communications Specialist in the Cornell Local Roads program and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences representative on the EA. He has been at Cornell for over two years and has served on the EA for over a year and a half. He noted that most institutions do not have opportunities for staff to be involved in shared governance at this depth, and attributed the EA for allowing him to become part of a wider community. He noted the importance of representing and serving constituents, and urged EA members to look for opportunities outside of resolutions, such as establishing partnerships or working on projects. Chair Howell stated that he wants to be a resource and help members accomplish the goals they want to take on. He urged EA members to reach out with any questions or concerns and thanked G. Giambattista for the Robert's Rules training she held last week. He highlighted that EA members are employees first and that service on the EA should not come at the detriment of their foremost responsibilities. The meeting today will focus on committee structure and retreat at the end of July, and he welcomed anyone interested in becoming involved in the planning process to contact him or H. Depew. They will also begin working on Staff Development Day, which will be a great promotional opportunity for the EA. The Executive Committee will also be working on frameworks, structures, and tools to better serve EA members. He urged EA members to get to know and support each other. EA members are also welcome to coordinate with H. Depew to bring speakers to meetings for presentations on issues relevant or important to staff. He also asked any member who does not know how to handle or respond to constituent inquiries to contact the Executive Board or reach out to another EA representative.
- b. Resolution 2: Committee Consolidation
 - i. H. Depew said this resolution is still in progress.
 - ii. Chair Howell explained they will discuss the resolution but will not vote on it. This meeting will introduce the resolution and provide information on its background and why the committees are set up this way. Members will be able to discuss and ask questions between now and the retreat. At the retreat, a discussion will be called to see whether they can actually do work in the committees and potentially a resolution then. He asked the chairs of the committees from the

former term to hold at least one informational meeting before the retreat to introduce new members to the work. New members can then meet committee members and get an idea of which committees they would like to join. A schedule will be sent out later. After passing a resolution at the retreat, the EA will elect committee chairs and choose committee assignments. Committees can then begin setting their goals.

- iii. C. Sanzone explained that the resolution is aimed at closing a loop on a year's worth of experiment going back to their retreat last summer when they reviewed committee structure. There were concerns that not all committees were fully staffed and that they were not getting great participation. The thinking was that there was a fracture with too many committees, and the idea was to try to consolidate a few committees for a year. They merged the Communications Committee with the Staff Recognition and Awards Committee, and somewhat merged the Personnel Policy Committee with the Benefits Committee in practical terms by focusing on a larger scope of items. From her standpoint, the feedback was good and she chaired one of the merged committees. C. Sanzone reported the change gave the committee a better chance for dialogue and participation, and allowed members to draw from a larger group for input, volunteering activities, and tasks. This resolution seeks to formalize those changes as the committees they currently have are standing committees. In order to continue with the consolidated structure, they need to formalize it by amending the bylaws. She explained that the resolution attempts to outline the background information and point to an edited version of the bylaws where they have made those changes, whether it is to the names or charges of the committees. However, there are a couple questions, mainly regarding the University Benefits Committee which they consolidated in theory with Personnel Policy that is actually a joint committee with Faculty Senate. There is also a question about where the Transportation Task Force should go. It is an ad hoc committee they established a couple years ago to address transportation and parking. K. Mahoney has been the chair of the committee and has been working with Director Bridgette Brady of Transportation Services and her staff. Since the resolution does not yet have formal language for a charge to put that in the bylaws as a standing committee, they are proposing to extend the task force as an ad hoc through this term. However, she welcomes feedback and other suggestions.
- iv. K. Mahoney added this was a question that came up in their last session as the EA never amended the bylaws to add a committee and also did not extend the resolution to retain the task force. She suggested either pursuing one of those ideas or pulling the effort into another committee.
- v. K. LoParco asked K. Mahoney for her preference.
- vi. K. Mahoney stated that in a longstanding way, transportation should be the consideration of an existing committee that will maintain a relationship with an administrative office. The task force is dealing with an acute tension regarding staff with transportation issues, and they have not seen the results or witnessed any advances of the studies that have been conducted. However, she does not feel a longstanding need for a separate Transportation Committee as if things were running well it would not be needed. She advocated for extending the task force, but also looking at which standing committee should have the charge.
- vii. B. Fortenberry works on North Campus and advocated for the Transportation Committee to become its own standalone committee. If the University moves to extend the number of students on campus and potentially raise the number of staff to support them, there will be concerns of parking availability, TCAT services, and other issues. He viewed this as a high level topic with a potential to continue growing.
- viii. B. Goodell said he was on the Transportation Advisory Committee in 2001 that dealt with TCAT issues at the time and served as a conduit for community input. It was also a liaison to the Transportation office on campus. He also advocated for a standalone committee.
- ix. G. Giambattista stated that a task force also needs structure and suggested that in time, it could become its own committee.

- x. H. Sheldon stated that the EA should be involved in transportation as long as the university's efforts in its own transportation task force continues so that they can have input. He advocated for extending the ad hoc nature of the committee for another year at a minimum so they can stay in touch with all the changes taking place.
- xi. K. LoParco advocated for keeping the task force in the resolution, and to have the task force create its own resolution during the year to become a committee.
- xii. A. Haenlin-Mott clarified that even if there is not a separate committee, the topic will not go away and its issues will continue to be on the forefront.
- xiii. J. Kruser sent an online chat stating that he believes K. Barth is chairing the UA Campus Infrastructure Committee that will have a focus on transportation.
- xiv. Chair Howell announced there will be more opportunities to discuss the resolution.
- xv. C. Sanzone explained to new members that this resolution will be on Box and EA members can add comments for additional feedback. They will provide a summary of the feedback leading up to the retreat.
- xvi. Chair Howell said this is an effort to clamp down on confusion and encouraged members to reach out with any questions or concerns.
- c. Approval of FY20 Budget
 - i. Chair Howell supported bringing transparency and understanding about the budget of expenses and how it works. Per the bylaws, the EA needs to approve a budget at this meeting and he stressed the importance of a budget needing to be passed before they can co-sponsor Staff Development Day and be able to move funds. He noted the budget as document that can be amended and worked on, and he is willing to research certain line items, work on amendments, and answer any questions. He hopes that by the end of retreat, they will have their budget set. Going forward, A. McCabe will be providing quarterly budget reports to the EA. They have not decided which meetings will fit into the quarters yet, but there will be an opportunity to ask questions. If there are discretionary or incidental funding requests, the committee chairs will convey it to the executive committee that can then see if it could fit within the budget.
 - ii. B. Goodell motioned to vote to approve the budget
 - 1. Motion was seconded
 - 2. A. Howell requested the motion be **tabled**
 - iii. A. McCabe gave an overview of the budget. They have \$9,650 for the year. He researched the budgets from the past five years and included a "5 year avg" column.
 - 1. The average spent on food for the past five years was \$4,031.56. Last year, the EA spent around \$5,000, but only \$3,000 was budgeted.
 - 2. An upcoming resolution seeks to mandate any extra money to go into the CARE Fund. The \$450 allocation for the CARE Fund this year is fixed
 - 3. The allocation for the President's Address is also fixed. Last year's event cost approximately \$2,100, and the five year average is approximately \$1,900. He allocated \$2,000 and reminded the EA that it have the ability to move money as they go along.
 - 4. Staff Development Day in the past was not a different line item, but inside the Staff Recognition and Awards category. The proposed cost is for this year is \$1,350 and that is committed. Staff Recognition and Awards was budgeted \$2,200 last year and the EA spent \$85 with a five year average of about \$656. He ball-parked \$700, and explained that if the \$1,350 proposed cost for Staff Development Day is added, it equates to what was previously the Staff Recognition and Awards allocation.
 - 5. Education has been budgeted \$100 as it was the previous year. The EA never spent money from the fund, but he proposed \$50 to in the event something unforeseen comes up.
 - 6. Personnel Policy was allocated \$100 last year and the five year average is \$58. The EA spent \$41 last year, so he allocated \$50.
 - 7. International Operations has a \$74 five year average expenditure, but it was not used four out of the five years. He budged \$100 for it.

8. The Communications budget was \$500 last year. The five year average is \$788, but the average is heavily skewed by a \$3,650 expenditure in 2018. He proposed \$250, but C. Sanzone pointed out that there may be an expenditure one year that will support years beyond. She will figure out what she thinks they may need on that line.
 - a. C. Sanzone explained the big purchase a few years ago was for promotional events and giveaways, including post-it notes, polo shirts for all EA members, and nametags. They did run out of promotional items so they will need to replenish it.
9. The Executive expense includes space rental fees and copy/printing charges. In 2019, they budgeted \$100 but spent \$1,095. It has averaged \$900 in the past two years but in the three years prior they did not spend any money. He proposed \$900 and suggested it could go either way.
10. The amount left is \$3,600 and he placed it in the Administrative category, which includes food for meetings. He met with G. Giambattista and went over the meetings of the year. They will refer to the quarterly updates to see if adjustments will be needed.
- iv. A. Sieverding asked how Staff Development Day was previously funded or if the event was new.
 1. C. Sanzone replied that Staff Development Day is not new and last year, the EA used surplus money from the budget. This year, they want to have a deliberate line item for it and not worry about drawing money from other places.
 2. A. McCabe pointed out that while \$2,200 was budgeted for Staff Recognition and Awards last year, only \$85 was used. He assumes that is where the funds came from.
 3. Chair Howell stated a push for flexibility and transparency.
- v. EA member made a motion on the floor to vote.
 1. Motion was seconded
 2. Motion to approve the budget – **approved**
- d. Approval of Full 2019-2020 Term Schedule
 - i. A. Haenlin-Mott asked when the schedule will be posted.
 1. Chair Howell replied it would be posted as soon as they approve the schedule.
 - ii. B. Goodell asked how the retreat would be scheduled.
 1. Chair Howell said there will be a poll sent out.
 - iii. C. Sanzone said she noticed the scheduled meeting on August 7 falls on Staff Development Day. She asked if the EA would consider helping out at the table in lieu of a meeting as it is a table event, or if they would consider moving the meeting.
 - iv. Chair Howell suggested approving the calendar as it is and working out details later to change it as necessary. They can also change it closer to the date.
 - v. Motion to approve the Full 2019-2020 Term Schedule
 1. Motion was seconded
 2. Motion to approve the schedule – **approved**

IV. Committee Reports

- a. Communications and Awards Committee
 - i. C. Sanzone reported that last year's big fall activity was to put on the President's Address to Staff, which included working on communications and logistics on food and the award they give out. The committee also focused on increasing constituency outreach, which amounted to participation in a handful of tabling events, including High Five RED Day and the annual procurement services Supplier Show. Some of these events occur annually, but they are always looking for new opportunities. The committee also manages the EA Facebook account and supports elections. Members also spent some time last year reviewing their award programs as there were a couple years where the George Peter Award and the Opperman Award went off track. The committee decided to keep the George Peter Award and reboot it this year. C. Sanzone also announced that there are two outreach events scheduled this summer. High Five RED Day that is put on by HR is on Tuesday, July 16 and the office has a handful of locations throughout campus giving out treats for a few hours. Times vary slightly from each location but

it is generally from 12p.m. to 2p.m. The EA piggybacks on the event and shows up at their locations for networking and brochure handouts. She noted there will still be vacancies on the EA this summer. Staff Development Day is set for Wednesday, August 7 and it is an all-day event. The EA will be sponsoring a breakfast and Chair Howell will be introducing the keynote speaker. They will have a table at the Resource Fair with signups and general information about the EA. E. Miller will be sending out a sign-up for tabling and their hope is for everyone to sign up for at least one of those events. There will be multiple shifts for Staff Development Day and there are five locations for Red Day in July. EA members will also be receiving an email from her about shirts and nametags. She has some shirts in stock but she will need information on sizes. She explained that EA members wear their shirts during events so they can be identified and recognized. They have also been asked to co-sponsor Lawn Games this summer on the Arts Quad.

- ii. Chair Howell reminded EA members to pick up an EA shirt.
- iii. C. Wiggers brought up that the EA may have missed an opportunity to potentially recognize staff. An announcement was made this past weekend regarding two tenured track faculty members receiving \$15,000 awards for initiatives in diversity and inclusion that are sponsored by the president and provost. He asked if the EA could inquire into this and whether staff could be included.
- b. Education Committee
 - i. M. Benda said she was previously on the Education Committee, and since she was not able to attend the meetings she went over the notes. The committee was able to find out about the Employee Degree Program (EDP) and reported that there are only about 159 employees enrolled. Members also broke down categories from where they all came from, and also discussed tuition and the reimbursement program. All notes are available in Box but she encouraged more involvement in EDP. There was also a discussion to have an information session across campus to discuss Cornell history, urban legends, and facts.
- c. Welfare Committee
 - i. A. Haenlin-Mott reported that one large initiative the committee worked on was taking all the data from the Staff Discussions collaboration and framing it into a report that C. Wiggers used in presenting to the administration. There were participants not in the EA who also contributed in the committee. The committee also examined issues of sexual harassment and ensured there was a good contact with the Title IX Task Force. Chair Howell had also put forth a resolution about climate literacy and the committee looked at what it could do to facilitate that. The committee will work towards continuing communication between the EA, Campus Sustainability Office, and other partners. The committee needs a chair moving forward.
 - ii. H. Depew is the representative from the EA to a team of faculty, staff and graduate students to evaluate how people are being trained on Title IX materials and to take suggestions.
 - iii. A. Howell encouraged the EA to look at the report on the website.
 - iv. C. Wiggers announced that A. Haenlin-Mott was recently recognized as a cornerstone for her work.
- d. Transportation Committee
 - i. K. Mahoney explained the task force was formed in response to the results of a staff survey identifying transportation as a huge concern for staff. Members advanced a resolution calling for a comprehensive transportation study for Cornell. While the resolution was not supported by the president, it spurred a strong partnership with Transportation Services and its ability to advance two studies: a parking optimization study and the Cornell Transportation Survey. The committee spent the first part of the year focusing on specific concerns raised by staff, such as parking areas. Once the consultants were brought onboard, the task force's work transitioned to finding information, responding to consultant reporting and documentation, providing recommendations, and reviewing the presentation to communities and the leadership. In addition, they advanced work with the Benefits and Policy Committee around a notion of intersection between the transportation system and workplace flexibility. She also participated in

a conversation with the University Committee led by HR, Transportation Services, real estate and others focused on housing, transportation, and the workplace. The committee also speaks on the Transportation Safety Council. Going forward, the committee will meet with B. Brady as they go over the recommendations of the consultants, and will continue to work on workplace flexibility.

e. Executive Committee

- i. H. Depew explained the Staff Conversations initiative in which the committee partnered with Vice President Mary Opperman's office to go around campus and talk to units about staff connectedness and things that may help and hinder it. A lot of work was done to take this information and codify it into summaries, charts, and graphs. One unit, the Vet School, stood out as a lot of individuals reported feeling disconnected. She stated that the employees did not have as many opportunities to partake in events and did not have a dedicated space. A lot of work was done with the Vet School, HR, M. Opperman, and the EA to discuss how they can help this group. From that, they created a break room for the Vet School and they have been working with M. Benda on further assistance. They will help purchase a microwave for them as a token of appreciation and to convey that they are listening. The Executive committee is also working on the President's Address to Staff, retreat, and tools it can develop this upcoming year. In the past, members worked on templates and information request systems.

f. Elections Committee

- i. Chair Howell said the Elections Committee is not staffed up and there will be opportunities to fill those. He urged members to speak up about ideas for recruitment and retention at the retreat, and invite employees interested in the EA and its work to these public meetings or take down their information.

g. Benefits and Policy Committee

- i. T. Chams noted this was one of the merged committees. Last term, the focus was to establish communication between the committee and HR on issues and feedback. Committee members had some topics they wanted to discuss and HR had new policies and benefits it wanted to get feedback on. The committee tried to avoid taking a resolution path, and instead this new method was aimed at communicating and getting feedback from offices to work out issues. One topic the committee worked on was how they could avoid the two-year waiting period non-exempt employees face before their retirement benefits kick in. The committee wants to continue bridging the gap between employment benefits among employees, work on a vacation policy and redlining at certain colleges for certain employees, and discuss supplementary retirement options. After the study was completed, the committee felt a need for more outreach to staff and constituents. One suggestion that came up was having a consistent newsletter. He stated that while there is a newsletter that is more HR-branded, the idea was to have a column in the newsletter the EA could take advantage of and perhaps spotlight EA members and provide a short paragraph on them. The EA currently does not have a way of communicating to constituents.
- ii. G. Giambattista clarified that the newsletter is put out by University Relations and not HR. The assembly can send out a newsletter that could go out to all staff.
- iii. Motion to extend the meeting by five minutes – extended.

V. New Business

- i. A. Howell highlighted informal ways EA members could recognize the contributions staff make across campus, such as making a phone call or sending an email. He reminded EA members that they represent a certain constituency and urged them to communicate appreciation for their works.

VI. Adjournment

- a. A. Howell adjourned the meeting at 1:34pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Tran

Clerk of the Assembly