

Bylaws

Cornell University Employee Assembly

As amended on September 6, 2023

1 **PREAMBLE**

2 The Employee Assembly (herein after referred to as the Assembly) establishes these Bylaws
3 under the authority granted by Article IV Section 7 of the Charter of the Employee Assembly.

4 **ARTICLE I: PROCEDURES**

5 **Section 1.1: Protections**

6 A. The Assembly and its committees shall respect and protect the rights of individuals.
7 When a subject under discussion or examination requires the use of confidential
8 information, all reasonable efforts shall be made to safeguard the confidentiality of this
9 information.

10 **Section 1.2: Regular Meetings**

11 A. Regular meetings of the Assembly are on the first and third Wednesdays of the month
12 from 12:00 - 1:15 p.m., except University holidays and other dates cancelled at the
13 discretion of the Executive Committee. The Assembly may adopt a different schedule of
14 regular meetings by majority vote.

15 **Section 1.3: Organizational Meeting**

16 A. The Chair sets a date for the organizational meeting to occur as soon as possible after
17 the conclusion of employee elections, but no later than April 15. In this meeting, the
18 Assembly:
19 i. Elects the officers of the Assembly for the next session in accordance with the
20 procedures set forth in Article II, Section 2.2 of these Bylaws;
21 ii. Receives nominations and appoints representatives to the University Assembly
22 and any other committees or commissions with vacancies that occur in the next
23 session; and,
24 iii. Sets a schedule of regular meetings for the next session.

- 25 B. All members who will be seated as of the start of the next session of the Assembly are
26 voting members for the purposes of the meeting and must make every reasonable
27 effort to attend and participate. The meeting must be held in closed session. The first
28 order of business for the meeting must be appointment of a temporary chair who will
29 preside until the Chair is elected for the next session. The temporary chair may be any
30 voting member who does not seek election as Chair. The second order of business must
31 be election of the Chair for the next session. The temporary chair must yield to the
32 newly elected Chair immediately after their election.
- 33 C. If any positions are uncontested, the Chair may decide to vote by hand instead of by
34 secret ballot.

35 **Section 1.4: Special Meetings**

- 36 A. The Chair may call special meetings to consider matters demanding immediate
37 attention, or such meetings shall be called when requested by one-fourth of the seated
38 members of the Assembly.

39 **Section 1.5: Quorum**

- 40 A. A quorum of voting members is required for the Assembly to do business at a regularly
41 scheduled meeting.
- 42 B. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the seated voting members of the Assembly.

43 **Section 1.6: Executive Session**

- 44 A. The Assembly may go into executive session to discuss confidential matters by majority
45 vote of those seated members who are present.

46 **Section 1.7: Agendas, Resolutions, and Minutes**

- 47 A. Agenda items will be compiled by the Executive Vice Chair in consultation with the
48 Executive Committee. The Executive Vice Chair must post and distribute the agenda at
49 least twenty-four hours prior to a meeting of the Assembly.
- 50 B. All resolutions must be sponsored by at least one voting member of the Assembly. All
51 resolutions shall be reviewed by an appropriate committee of the Assembly for no more
52 than thirty days before introduction at a regular meeting of the Assembly. Approval by
53 the reviewing committee shall be a majority vote of the committee members present.
54 The chair of the committee that reviewed the resolution shall provide a brief summary
55 of the committee's thoughts and/or concerns on the resolution when it is presented at a

56 regular meeting of the Assembly. Under extenuating circumstances or time pressures,
57 the Chair can determine that a resolution should be brought to the floor without
58 committee review.

59 C. The Office of the Assemblies prepares minutes of each meeting, and makes them
60 available to the university community after approval by the Assembly.

61 **Section 1.8: Attendance**

62 A. Attendance is required at all scheduled meetings for all voting members. Voting
63 members:

- 64 i. Must notify the Executive Vice Chair in advance of any absence.
- 65 ii. May be unseated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee if they have
66 more than two unexcused absences from regular meetings of the Assembly
67 during a given term. Unseated members neither count toward the total vote, nor
68 quorum.
- 69 iii. May be reseated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

70 **Section 1.9: Voting**

- 71 A. The Chair may count any proxy vote that is received before the question to which it
72 pertains is called. Votes submitted by proxy do not count towards quorum.
- 73 B. Voting may be conducted by electronic means at the discretion of the Executive
74 Committee.
- 75 C. EA members may abstain from voting at regularly scheduled or special meetings of the
76 Assembly. However, if the total number of abstentions is greater than the total number
77 of votes in favor of a resolution or motion, the resolution or motion fails.
- 78 D. Abstentions do not count toward quorum.

79 **Section 1.10: Parliamentary Procedure**

- 80 E. Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall be the basis for determining procedures for
81 debate and general conduct of business not covered in this document.
- 82 F. The Assembly is not constrained to use parliamentary procedure for all discussions.

83 **ARTICLE II: OFFICERS**

84 **Section 2.1: Officers Defined**

- 85 A. The officers of the Assembly are the Chair, the Executive Vice Chair, the Vice Chair for
86 Operations, the Vice Chair for Communications, and the Parliamentarian.

87 **Section 2.2: Election of Officers**

- 88 A. The officer elections occur in the following order: Chair, Executive Vice Chair, Vice Chair
89 for Operations, Vice Chair for Communications, and Parliamentarian. For each office,
90 the chair presiding over the meeting:
- 91 i. Entertains nominations of members for the position to be filled;
 - 92 ii. Closes nominations;
 - 93 iii. Allows each candidate to make an opening statement of specified duration;
 - 94 iv. Allows all members present to ask questions of the candidates for a specified
95 period of time;
 - 96 v. Closes question and answer period;
 - 97 vi. Moves to a vote by secret ballot; and,
 - 98 vii. Repeats voting as needed until one candidate receives a majority of votes cast
99 and eliminates the candidate receiving the fewest votes in each round of voting.

100 **Section 2.3: Terms**

- 101 A. The term of office is concurrent with a session of the Assembly. Officers may not serve
102 more than two consecutive terms.

103 **Section 2.4: Recalling Officers**

- 104 A. The Assembly may remove any officer by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of seated
105 members. The Assembly then immediately elects a new officer to serve the remainder
106 of the term.
- 107 B. The above procedure shall also apply to chairs and members of committees of the
108 Assembly.

109 **Section 2.5: Executive Committee**

- 110 A. The Executive Committee consists of the officers of the Assembly. The Executive
111 Committee:
- 112 i. Formulates and approves an agenda for each meeting of the Assembly;
 - 113 ii. Formulates, in consultation with the chairs of the Assembly's committees, a
114 budget of expenses for the Assembly and presents this budget to the Assembly
115 for approval at the first regular meeting of the Assembly;

- 116 iii. Conducts an orientation meeting at the beginning of each term with the
117 members of the Assembly. The agenda of the orientation meeting includes:
118 a. dissemination of written and verbal guidelines which articulate
119 expectations for membership and for efficient operation of the Assembly
120 and its committees;
121 b. continual communication with the Executive Committee and the roles of
122 the officers;
123 c. the role of committees and best practices for committee operations;
124 d. the legislative process and the setting of priorities for committees and
125 the Assembly;

126 **Section 2.6: Officer Responsibilities**

127 A. Chair

- 128 a. Assures the smooth and effective operation and maintenance of the Assembly;
129 b. Presides over meetings of the Assembly;
130 c. Delegates responsibilities as needed to accomplish the duties of the office and
131 the goals set forth in the Charter and these Bylaws;
132 d. Transmits notice of the actions and recommendations of the Assembly;
133 e. Reports periodically to the Assembly on the disposition or current status of its
134 actions and recommendations; and,
135 f. Serves as spokesperson of the Assembly, corresponds with the President of the
136 University, enumerating actions taken by the Assembly, and submits an annual
137 year-end report to the University President.

138 B. Executive Vice Chair

- 139 a. Assists the Chair as needed;
140 b. Chairs the meetings of the Executive Committee and distributes the agenda and
141 meeting materials for regular and special meetings of the Assembly;
142 c. Reviews minutes prepared by the Office of the Assemblies and distributes drafts
143 to Assembly members;
144 d. Notifies individuals and units directly affected by pending business of the
145 Assembly or its committees which includes:
146 i. the chief contact for the for the resolution or committee action being
147 undertaken; and,
148 ii. the charge to the committee conducting the business and the dates of
149 meetings when the business will be considered, if applicable.

- 150 e. Presides in the absence of the Chair.

151 C. Vice Chair for Operations

- 153 a. Monitors and supervises the operations of the Assembly’s committees and the
154 Assembly’s appointees to other committees;
155 b. Advises committee chairs on issues of process and directs inquiries as needed;
156 c. Receives nominations and expressions of interest in membership in the Assembly
157 and presents slates of candidates to fill incidental vacancies as needed;
158 d. Oversees and tracks the finances of the Assembly with assistance of the Office of
159 the Assemblies;
160 e. Monitors financial statements and authorizes expenditures in consultation with
161 the Executive Committee;
162 f. Reports periodically to the Assembly on the status of the funds;
163 g. Prepares a yearly expenditure report outlining the use of funds for the past fiscal
164 year; and,
165 h. Prepares the annual fund request and budget proposal.

166 D. Vice Chair for Communications

- 167 a. Chairs the Communications Committee;
168 b. Develops and executes communications plans for significant Assembly actions,
169 projects, and initiatives;
170 c. Arranges for advertising, postering, email campaigns and outreach programs;
171 d. Prepares and distributes the Employee Assembly newsletter in consultation with
172 the Communications Committee; and,
173 e. Reviews and approves internal and external communications of the Assembly in
174 consultation with the Executive Committee and the Communications Committee.

175 E. Parliamentarian

- 176 a. Assures that meetings follow procedures found within the Charter and the Bylaws
177 of the Assembly and rules on questions and disputes related to interpretation of
178 those rules.
179 b. Coordinates with the Office of the Assemblies to ensure that the governing
180 documents of the Assembly are public and reflect any changes made by the
181 Assembly.

182 **ARTICLE III: COMMITTEES**

183 **Section 3.1: Generally**

- 184 A. The Assembly may establish standing or ad hoc committees as appropriate by a
185 majority vote of the seated voting members of the Assembly.
186

- 187 B. Except where otherwise indicated, any employee is eligible to serve on any committee
188 of the Assembly and the term of membership on committees is concurrent with a
189 session of the Assembly.

190 **Section 3.2: Ad-Hoc Committees**

- 191 A. For each ad-hoc committee, the committee charge shall be written prior to the
192 formation of the committee and the appointment of its members.
193 B. Every ad-hoc committee charge shall include a "sunset" clause with a specific date by
194 which the committee is expected to report back to the Assembly.

195 **Section 3.3: Standing Committees**

- 196 A. Unless otherwise specified in its charge, each committee will be chaired by a voting
197 member of the Assembly and will consist of eleven voting members:
198 a. Six members appointed by and from the voting membership of the Assembly,
199 one of whom serves as chair;
200 b. Five members appointed by the Assembly from the employee community who
201 are not members of the Assembly.
202 B. Each standing committee must:
203 a. Hold and publicize at least two meetings per semester that are open to the staff
204 community where it receives and discusses items of business relevant to its
205 charge;
206 b. Publish and submit, in a timely fashion, agendas and minutes of each meeting
207 and make every reasonable attempt to ensure that members of the staff
208 community affected by its recommendations are informed of the agenda of its
209 meetings and of its recommendations.

210 **Section 3.4: Charges of Standing Committees**

- 211 A. Communications, Outreach and Recognition Committee
212 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:
213 a. Publicize the activities of the Assembly and its committees, including the agendas
214 of meetings, actions taken, and events organized by the Assembly through all
215 available and appropriate media;
216 b. Develop and execute communications plans for significant Assembly actions,
217 projects, and initiatives;
218 c. Review and approve internal and external communications of the Assembly;
219

- 220 d. Support and facilitate activities which raise awareness in the employee
221 community of the Assembly's role and function;
- 222 e. Coordinate and execute staff events and recognition activities sponsored by the
223 Assembly, including the annual President's Address to Staff;
- 224 f. Identify and examine opportunities for staff recognition by the Assembly and the
225 university;
- 226 g. Review the Assembly's staff recognition programs and recommend changes; and
- 227 h. Review nominations and approve staff recognition awards, including the George
228 Peter Award for Dedicated Service, according to rules and selection criteria
229 adopted by the Assembly.

230 The committee shall be chaired by the Vice Chair for Communications. The HR Events
231 Manager, HR Communications Manager, and a representative from the Cornell
232 Chronicle shall be invited to serve as a non-voting members of the committee. The
233 committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The
234 committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be
235 advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.
236

237 B. Employee Education and Development Committee

238 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 239 a. Review programs and proposals affecting employee education, including work-
240 related and elective educational activities, and recommend changes;
- 241 b. Identify employee education needs and opportunities for employees to engage in
242 the academic mission of the university through research and programmatic
243 activities;
- 244 c. Review and recommend proposals for pipeline development and professional
245 advancement opportunities for employees; and,
- 246 d. Recommend actions the university may undertake to address employee
247 education needs.

248 A representative from Benefit Services, a representative from Organizational and
249 Workforce Development, and a representative from the School of Continuing Education
250 and Summer Sessions shall be invited to serve as non-voting members of the
251 committee. The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems
252 appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration
253 before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

254 C. Employee Welfare Committee

255 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 256 a. Review and recommend proposals and initiatives related to employee health and
257 wellness, work/life, dependent care and family support, diversity and inclusion,
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- 259 b. sustainability, transportation, compensation, and any other topic deemed
260 relevant to employee welfare.

261 The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate.
262 The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can
263 be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

264 D. Elections Committee

265 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 266 a. Review Assembly election rules and procedures and recommend changes as
267 needed;
268 b. Apply election rules and procedures approved by the Assembly; and,
269 c. Plan and support, in collaboration with the Communications Committee, efforts to
270 solicit candidates for vacant positions in the Assembly.

271 The Elections Committee consists of all members of the Assembly whose terms
272 continue beyond the current session of the Assembly. The committee may propose,
273 review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve
274 resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly
275 for debate and for a vote.

276 E. Benefits and Policy Committee

277 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 278 a. In collaboration with the Office of Human Resources, review and recommend
279 changes to endowed and statutory benefits and personnel policies of the
280 university, and other policies affecting the work environment at Cornell;
281 b. Solicit from employees and university departments opinions, information, and
282 advice relevant to issues before the committee; and
283 c. In collaboration with the Faculty Senate, evaluate and make recommendations
284 for changes to the University Benefits Committee, which is chartered jointly by
285 the Employee Assembly and the Faculty Senate.

286 The Associate Vice President for Human Resources or a delegate shall be invited to
287 serve as a non-voting member of the committee. The committee may propose, review,
288 and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve
289 resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly
290 for debate and for a vote. The committee will appoint members, as needed, to serve on
291 the University Benefits Committee.
292

293 **ARTICLE IV: PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE EMPLOYEE**
294 **ASSEMBLY**

295 **Section 4.1: Cornellians Aiding and Responding to Emergencies**
296 **Grant Fund**

- 297 A. The Assembly establishes the Cornellians Aiding and Responding to Emergencies
298 (CARE) grant fund to support and assist employees and faculty experiencing financial
299 hardship from non-medical catastrophic events beyond their control.

300 **ARTICLE V: SUSPENSION OF THE BYLAWS**

- 301 A. A seated voting member of the Assembly may make a motion to suspend an Article of
302 these Bylaws for a specified duration of a meeting.
303 B. The Article of these Bylaws is suspended with two-thirds of the seated voting members
304 voting in favor.
305 C. Article V, in its entirety, may not be suspended.

306 **ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENT**

- 307 A. Except where otherwise indicated, these bylaws are subject to amendment by a
308 majority of the seated voting members of the Assembly.