

**Charter**  
**Cornell University Employee Assembly**  
*As amended on September 21, 2020*

1 **PREAMBLE**

2 In response to a vote of the Cornell community and to effect direct and continued involvement of staff in  
3 the governance of non-academic affairs and in the life of the university, the President, pursuant to the  
4 authority delegated by the Board of Trustees, hereby establishes the Employee Assembly to be peopled by  
5 employees and to be concerned with those matters directly affecting the staff community of Cornell  
6 University.

7 **ARTICLE I: NAME**

8 A. The name of this organization shall be the Employee Assembly of Cornell University (herein after  
9 referred to as the Assembly).

10 **ARTICLE II: OBJECT**

- 11 A. The object of this Assembly shall be to ensure a direct focus for the continued involvement of  
12 exempt and non-exempt staff members in the governance of non-academic affairs and in the life of  
13 the University.
- 14 B. The Assembly will bring about a higher visibility for employees as community members, more  
15 equal participation with faculty and students in the policy-making process, and an increased sense  
16 of community among all constituencies through shared responsibilities. This is accomplished by  
17 charging the Assembly with the authority and the responsibility to examine any matters which  
18 involve the interests or concern the welfare of the non-academic employee community and to make  
19 proposals concerning those issues to the appropriate officers or decision-making bodies of the  
20 University.
- 21 C. The Assembly will actively seek to involve all segments of Cornell's diverse employee population in  
22 the Assembly's decision-making activities.

23

24 **ARTICLE III: ESTABLISHMENT**

25 **Section 1: Employee Defined**

- 26 A. For the purposes of this Charter, employees are any regular full-time and part-time staff members in  
27 non-exempt, exempt, or academic non-professorial staff categories who are employed at the Ithaca,  
28 Geneva, or Cornell Tech campuses of the university.

29 **Section 2: Session Defined**

- 30 A. A session of the Assembly shall be from June 1 until May 31 of the following calendar year.

31 **ARTICLE IV: AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

32 **Section 1: Legislative Authority Over Policies**

- 33 A. Subject to approval by the President, the Assembly shall have legislative authority to recommend  
34 changes to university policies that affect the staff community, including Human Resources and  
35 Personnel policies.  
36 B. The Assembly will have authority and control over its own policies, operations, and maintenance,  
37 including bylaws, procedures, and amendments.

38 **Section 2: Information Exchange**

- 39 A. The Assembly facilitates communication between employees and the President of the University;  
40 B. This Assembly interacts with and discusses issues of mutual interest with the Student Assembly, the  
41 Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, the University Assembly and the Faculty Senate.

42 **Section 3: Requests for Information**

- 43 A. The Assembly shall by majority vote have the authority to request information directly from a  
44 department, or a specific individual within that department, concerning the budget, policies, or  
45 actions of said department. The request for this information shall be made at a regular meeting of  
46 the Assembly.  
47 B. Should a request be refused, the Assembly by simple majority vote may request the information be  
48 given to the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer who shall forward it to the  
49 Assembly.

50 **Section 4: Reporting on the Actions of the Assembly**

- 51 A. Reporting to the President – Via the Actions listserve, managed by the Office of the Assemblies, all  
52 legislative actions of the Assembly will be reported by the Chair of the Assembly to the University  
53 President. The Assembly will respond to any requests for information from the President on its  
54 actions. The President may also request reconsideration of legislation proposed by the Assembly.  
55 Such a request must be filed within thirty days of notification of the legislation. The Assembly will  
56 take action on such a request, and, if the legislation is upheld, the Assembly will inform the  
57 President.
- 58 B. Reporting to Other Bodies – Via the same transmittal through the Actions listserve, the Assembly  
59 will report its actions to the GPSA, SA, UA, and the Faculty Senate.
- 60 C. Annual Report - The Chair of the Assembly will present an annual report at the last regular meeting  
61 prior to the Elections deadline of May 1 of each Assembly session. This report will be sent to the  
62 President of the University and made available to the staff community.
- 63 1. The report will include a summary of the Assembly’s work during the preceding year and, in  
64 addition, describe any unresolved issues that are expected to arise in the future. All members  
65 of the Cornell community will have access to this report.
- 66 2. The report must be shared with the Assembly prior to being presented to the University  
67 President.

68 **Section 5: Objection to Actions**

- 69 A. Objection of Assembly Actions by Another Assembly – Should another assembly object to an action  
70 of the Assembly, such an objection may be communicated to the Chair via the Actions listserve. At  
71 its next business meeting, the Assembly shall review the objection and either modify the original  
72 position to account for the objections of the other constituencies or reaffirm the original action.
- 73 B. Objection by the Assembly to Other Assemblies’ Actions – The Assembly may determine by a two-  
74 thirds vote of seated members that it objects to the action of another constituent assembly, and  
75 communicate such an objection via the Actions listserve. In such an event, reasonable procedures for  
76 the reconciliation of differences shall be pursued.

77 **Section 6: Representation Exclusions**

- 78 A. The Assembly may not represent any interested party, including either the University or its  
79 employees, in matters concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of  
80 employment, or terms and conditions of employment, and may not investigate the merits of  
81 individual grievances.

82 **Section 7: Public Hearings, Forums, and Referenda**

- 83 A. The Assembly will have the authority and responsibility to conduct public hearings, forums, and  
84 referenda concerning topics of current employee interest, and to determine other appropriate ways  
85 to best represent the needs and opinions of the staff community.

86 **ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP**

87 **Section 1: Eligibility**

- 88 A. Changes of status within the university do not alter the eligibility of a member to serve as long as  
89 that member remains an employee of the University.  
90 B. A voting member of the assembly may not serve concurrently as a trustee of the University.

91 **Section 2: Seat allocation**

- 92 A. The Assembly consists of 35 voting members elected by and from the eligible employee population  
93 at Cornell University.
- 94 1. Twelve voting members shall be elected to represent the following academic colleges and  
95 schools with one representative each: College of Agriculture & Life Sciences; College of  
96 Architecture, Art, & Planning; College of Arts & Sciences; College of Engineering / Computer  
97 & Information Science; The Graduate School and Cornell Law School (combined seat);  
98 College of Human Ecology; School of Industrial and Labor Relations; College of Veterinary  
99 Medicine; Cornell Tech; SC Johnson College of Business; School of Public Policy; School of  
100 Continuing Education and Summer Sessions and eCornell (combined seat).
  - 101 2. Ten voting members shall be elected to represent the following administrative units with one  
102 representative each: Alumni Affairs & Development; Cornell AgriTech; Facilities and  
103 Campus Services; Financial Affairs, Budget & Planning, Audit & Investment; Health &  
104 Safety; Human Resources; Library & Museum; Research, Tech Transfer & Information  
105 Technology; Student & Campus Life; University Relations and Central Administration (the  
106 Offices of the President, the Provost, the Board of Trustees, Counsel, Judicial Administrator,  
107 Ombudsman).
  - 108 3. Eleven voting members shall be elected to represent the following affinity groups with one  
109 representative each: BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color); Disability; Exempt;  
110 International; Less Than Five Years of Service; LGBTQ; More than 20 Years of Service; Non-  
111 Exempt; Retirees; Veterans; Women.

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- 112           a. Two voting members shall be appointed by the Division of Human Resources, in  
113           consultation with the HR Retiree Engagement Advisory Committee, to represent the  
114           Staff Retiree constituency. The two members shall share one vote but may serve on  
115           different committees. The two-year appointments shall be staggered for continuity  
116           purposed. The Assembly shall vote to accept the proposed candidates.
- 117           4. Two voting members shall be elected or appointed to represent staff at-large from across the  
118           University. At-Large representative seats may be filled by appointment from existing  
119           candidate pool after annual elections or by candidates from a department without clear  
120           Assembly representation. The term of At-Large representative seats will match the Assembly  
121           terms and be split to align with overall body turnover.

## 122   **Section 3: Ex-officio Members**

- 123           A. All members of the Cornell staff community are considered non-voting members of the Assembly,  
124           and are encouraged to attend and participate in meetings.
- 125           B. In addition, the following serve as members of the Assembly ex-officio without vote:
- 126                 1. the Employee Elected Trustee,  
127                 2. the Editor of PawPrint, and  
128                 3. the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer or a designee.

## 129   **Section 4: Vacancies**

- 130           A. Vacancy defined:
- 131                 1. A regular vacancy occurs when the term of a member expires, and may be filled by election.  
132                 2. An incidental vacancy occurs when:
- 133                         a. a seat remains vacant after a regular election;  
134                         b. a member resigns or is removed from membership; or,  
135                         c. a member ceases to be eligible for membership.
- 136           B. Filling regular vacancies by election:
- 137                 1. The assembly reviews and approves election rules, procedures, and a publicity plan for  
138                 elections within the first three meetings of the semester in which the elections will be held.  
139                 2. Candidates will be recused from any voting, discussion or disputes arising during the  
140                 election in which they are a candidate, unless specifically requested to respond by the chair  
141                 of the Elections Committee or Chair of the Assembly.  
142                 3. Elections must be completed and results tabulated no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> of each Assembly  
143                 session.
- 144           C. Filling incidental vacancies:

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- 145 1. In the event a seat remains open because an eligible staff candidate did not run for election,  
146 that seat is first filled from any eligible candidates not seated from other elections. If there are  
147 no eligible candidates, that seat remains open and quorum for that session will be based on  
148 the filled seats. If a candidate later emerges for that seat, the Assembly may vote by a simple  
149 majority of seated members to appoint that candidate to fill the remainder of the open seat's  
150 term.
- 151 2. Should an incidental vacancy occur for any seat, the Assembly seats the highest-ranked,  
152 unseated candidate from the most recent election for the seat.
- 153 3. Should an incidental vacancy occur and no eligible candidates remain to be seated from the  
154 most recent election for that seat, the Assembly may seat a member to fill the vacancy by the  
155 following process:
  - 156 a. The Assembly solicits interest from the employee community within two weeks of  
157 the vacancy's occurrence. The solicitation proceeds for no less than two weeks, and  
158 continues until it is closed by the Assembly.
  - 159 b. At the next meeting after solicitation has been closed, a slate of eligible candidates  
160 must be presented to the Assembly.
  - 161 c. To conduct the election, the chair of the meeting:
    - 162 i. Allows each candidate to make an opening statement;
    - 163 ii. Allows all members present to ask questions of the candidates, including the  
164 candidates for the office;
    - 165 iii. Closes question and answer period;
    - 166 iv. Moves to a vote by secret ballot; and,
    - 167 v. Repeats voting as needed until one candidate receives a majority of votes cast,  
168 eliminating the candidate receiving the fewest votes in each round of voting.
  - 169 d. Members who fill incidental vacancies shall serve the full remainder of the  
170 term.

## 171 **Section 5: Authority to Appoint Delegates, Committee Members and Liaisons**

- 172 A. The Assembly has staffing authority to appoint constituent representatives to assemblies and other  
173 committees.
- 174 B. Regarding the University Assembly, the Assembly has staffing authority to appoint representatives  
175 as follows:
  - 176 1. Five employees, of whom at least two are also members of the Assembly.
  - 177 2. These appointments shall be made before May 1 of each year.

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178 3. Members of the Assembly appointed to the University Assembly (UA) and/or any of its  
179 standing committees, may serve only as long as they remain a member of the Employee  
180 Assembly.

181 a.If at any time during the course of an Assembly session, a UA member appointed  
182 directly by or from the Assembly should vacate their seat, the seat shall be reassigned  
183 by a caucus of seated members of the Assembly, and appointed by the Executive  
184 Committee.

185 b.If at any time during the course of an Assembly session, a staff member appointed to  
186 the UA or one of its committees ceases to be eligible for their seat on the Assembly,  
187 the seat shall be reassigned by a caucus of the seated members of the Assembly, and  
188 appointment by the Executive Committee.

189 C. The Assembly will have the authority to appoint eligible employees to serve as non-voting liaisons  
190 to department, unit, administrative of university committees, councils, working groups, etc., as such  
191 need is conveyed.

## 192 **Section 6: Term**

193 A. The term of membership is three consecutive sessions of the Assembly. Terms are staggered such  
194 that one-third of the members' terms expire each year.

## 195 **Section 7: Removal**

196 A. Any member of the Assembly may motion to remove another member for conduct that is unethical,  
197 illegal, disruptive, or otherwise in conflict with the Charter and Bylaws of the Assembly or the  
198 University.

199 B. The Assembly must allow the member to attend any discussion, deliberation, or vote related to the  
200 removal and must inform all members at least one week in advance of any meeting where it will  
201 consider such a motion.

202 C. The Assembly may remove the member by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the seated  
203 membership.

## 204 **ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENT**

205 A. The Assembly may amend this Charter by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the seated members.  
206 The Assembly may not approve proposed amendments on the same date that they are proposed or  
207 modified.

208 B. Amendments are subject to approval by the President of the University.

Cornell University  
Employee Assembly

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212 *Last Date of Amendment to this Charter*  
213 *21 September 2020*