Student Assembly

Resolution 23: Transparency Regarding Cornell Administration Statements

Abstract: Urging the Cornell Administration to release transparent statements on campus communications that cover the full scope of situations and explicitly address the issue at hand.

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Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 10/05/2026

Type of Action: Recommendation

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Current Status: Adopted by the Assembly, Unanimous Consent, 10/22/2026

Whereas, Cornell students rely on University leadership for timely, accurate, and substantive communication during times that threaten the well-being and/or safety of the campus community

Whereas, Cornell’s officially released statements have failed to appropriately and coherently inform the student body of pertinent developments, often leaving students feeling frustrated and concerned,

Whereas, these gaps have become particularly apparent in the handling of the recent lawsuit filed against the University, the Chi Phi fraternity organization, and others by an anonymous student identified only as Jane Doe,

Whereas, in regard to the previously mentioned case, the first communication received by the student body was not until Friday, October 2nd, leaving students without substantive administrative support or clarity,

Whereas, this email was sent out after Cornell’s administration had already put out numerous statements to the press, showing Cornell’s administration did not prioritize communication to its campus community,

Whereas, the communications received have failed to adequately answer lingering questions posed by the student body, and have instead vaguely deflected to existing resources and offices,

Whereas, after receiving a CrimeAlert on November 8, 2024, for almost two years, the Cornell community received only one communication from our administration on this case while students were away from campus for Thanksgiving break on November 26, 2024;

Whereas, Vice President for Student & Campus Life Lombardi and President Kotlikoff have both emphasized concepts like 'communal strength' and 'togetherness' in their communications, and yet have failed to acknowledge the administration's felt absence amidst these difficult couple of weeks,

Whereas, these communications have been impersonal and formulaic in tone, failing to convey genuine empathy and leave students feeling unheard,

Whereas, students should not have to rely primarily on news outlets, social media, rumors, or outside reporting to understand serious events affecting their own campus while awaiting acknowledgment from their University;

Whereas, this consistent pattern has led to student mistrust in the University to effectively handle prominent cases of misconduct, especially in light of sexual violence and tragic suicide on campus,

Be it therefore resolved, that the student assembly calls upon Cornell administration to invest more care into crafting statements that effectively address incidents affecting the campus community, and release these statements in a timely fashion, rather than waiting until student concern, media attention, or public pressure make acknowledgment unavoidable,

Be it further resolved, President Kotlikoff upholds his word that the "[administration] will make a greater effort to explain what we can, to provide context about the actions Cornell has taken, and to be more transparent" and remain "committed to communicating more openly" (M. Kotlikoff, personal communication, October 3, 2026),

Be it further resolved, Vice President Lombardi upholds his word that "Cornell is committed to being as transparent as we can be" (R. Lombardi, personal communication, October 2, 2026),

Be it further resolved, that such communications should directly acknowledge the nature and severity of the situation, provide all information that can responsibly and legally be disclosed, identify available resources, explain actions being taken by the University, and clearly distinguish information that cannot yet be released from information the administration has simply chosen not to address;

Be it finally resolved, that transparency is not an optional gesture of goodwill but an essential responsibility of leadership, shall be treated as essential, especially in the context of sensitive issues and amidst the acknowledgment of difficult times, and that the University shall strive to

release more timely, specific, and substantive communication that demonstrates its commitment to students extends beyond rhetoric.

Respectfully Submitted,

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