

# Working Group C - Subgroup 2

## The Advocacy/Activist Component

Meeting 5 Talking Points  
November 30

# Recap 1: defining advocacy and activism

We define *advocacy as a representational act*, where we speak in favor of BIPOC communities. This could include

- advocating for representation in all committees and decision-making bodies at Cornell
- overseeing the required educational requirement

We define *activism as action-oriented, transgressive and transformative*. This could include

- creating a counterspace/space of gathering for BIPOC communities
- educating Cornell researchers (faculty and students) on how to conduct ethical community-based activist research
- supporting evidence-based research that will transform policy making

# Recap 2: what we agreed on so far

**Agreement A:** The center will meet the immediate expressed needs of BIPOC students, particularly our Black students, and be flexible enough in its scaffolding to meet the changing needs of students and faculty who will be part of the Cornell community into the future.

**Agreement B:** The center will be a space that is visible and easily accessible. It will be a space that is central both in terms of its location and the programming and support it offers.

**Agreement C:** The center will be a welcoming space for both advocacy and activism, with an internal (Cornell focused) and an external focus (Ithaca-specific but also beyond). *The center will focus on understanding the deeper issues of structural violence and oppression against BIPOC communities and the lateral coalition-building and solidarity that is required to build an anti-racist, just and equitable society*

*Black and Indigenous focused / POC inclusive*

# Recap 3: what would activist programming look like?

**Programming for the center space** will include activities aimed at

- Retaining BIPOC students at Cornell
- Providing space for BIPOC students organizations to meet
- Providing services for BIPOC students to excel at Cornell
- Connecting BIPOC students to prospective employers by hosting career fairs and other events
- ~~• Recruiting BIPOC students for admission to Cornell~~
- Engaging local BIPOC communities in the center's activities
  
- *Making appropriate externships/internships available to BIPOC students*
- *Building leadership skills*
- *Advocating for inclusion in campus governance and opportunities*

Q: Who holds the various units who recruit/support students and faculty accountable? And amplifies work being done across Cornell

# Recap 4: what would a center mean for students?

If the Center had a **physical location with “shareable space”**, then how might it affect student life? What would be its “environmental impact” on other academic units and programs? *Duplication is fine in some places/activities. We believe that demand currently outstrips available services on campus*

How might the Center **increase opportunities for student research and external engagement** beyond what is currently available? *In discussion*

If the Center housed the “**educational requirement for all Cornell students**” how will it impact other academic units and programs? *Not discussed yet*

# Cornell's current cultural centers/gathering spaces

Currently at Cornell, some of our cultural/meeting centers are **residential**, some are **programmatically**, and some are both.

## **Programmatic Centers at 626 Thurston Avenue** (overseen by Dean of Students, SCL)

- Asian & Asian American Center (A3C)
- LGBTQ Resource Center
- Multicultural Student Leadership & Empowerment
- First-Generation and Low-Income student support
- Undocumented and DACA

## **Programmatic Centers at Willard Straight** (overseen by Dean of Students, SCL)

- The Women's Resource Center
- Office of Spirituality and Meaning Making, inclusive of CURW and chaplaincies

## **Culturally based residential living environments**

- *In their own buildings:* Akwe:kon, Latino Living Center (LLC), Ujamaa
- *Embedded in larger dorms:* Holland International Living Center, Loving House, Multicultural Living Learning Unit (overseen by Housing and Residential Life, SCL)

# What would “Outward Facing” mean ...

1. Might the proposed center coalesce outward-facing trends in all disciplines and fields across STEM, social sciences and the humanities around issues of anti-racism, injustice and inequality? *Think carefully of the people who will actually do the work and have the capacity to engage. Should the engagement include a bar of some sort?*
2. Might the proposed center bring issues and concerns around racism, bias, equity and justice to all the ways in which students engage the outside world whether it is in the private, public or civil society sectors? Entrepreneurship@Cornell / Engaged Cornell / Public Service Center
3. Might academic programming at the proposed center always include a contingent of permanent and/or visiting PoPs who are drawn from the social justice/equity corner of the private and civil society sectors? *Add: Activists-in-residence*
4. *Might this center be a place that helps the institution hold itself accountable in the anti-racism work that is being done at Cornell? And a place for affirmative work in collaboration with units*
5. *Add: Interventions in policy making*