

A MEETING
OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020

First 20 minutes of this meeting not recorded.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: We had the AFPSF Committee look at it. They, too, were supportive, but there were some concerns, and also some concerns that showed up on our website. When we walked into the December 16th meeting or started preparing for it as if we would vote there, but then Risa came up with some excellent suggestions that showed up in the form of amendments, and we just had to defer the discussion.

Over the break, this is like over the last ten days or so, Risa got together with General Counsel Madelyn Wessel and the AFPSF to try to hammer out the differences. The net result is what we'll call the January 14th revision that basically everyone is happy with, meaning Madelyn is happy with it, and Madelyn sort of is in touch with the administration and then will present this at the trustees, so to speak. Risa was pleased with it and the AFPSF was pleased with it, all to the extent of a 10-0 vote.

Online, we put up side-by-side comparisons. The whole document's like a page and a half, but because I know you're so busy, you can go to that web page and look at the side-by-side comparisons.

What are we going to do? We're going to do an up or down vote on this, hopefully. If it's approved, then Madelyn can go to the trustees and basically say that this has faculty support. That will have an impact. Again, it's something that the trustees have to sign up for. They are meeting towards the end of next week. If we

don't approve this, then basically we'll just continue to live for the time being with the current text, which is now 70 or 60 years old. That's the background.

Here's what we've got to do. Because we're going to vote and because it's a resolution, we've got to do our sort of nod towards Robert's Rules. First of all, what we want to do is open up the discussion, then we want to throw out the old resolution, bring in the new resolution, talk about it and vote.

The first thing here is do we have -- I see we are okay to go on. Let's keep going. We want to get this thing off the table, so the AFPSF wants to withdraw this resolution. If we stuck with it, we'd vote on that thing that showed up on December 1st, but we'd like to get rid of that. Is there any objection to doing that? Are there any raised hands there? Anyone objecting to -- no. Great.

JILL SHORT: Move, seconds and --

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Okay, yeah. I feel it's kind of funny to do this, but we do have to pay attention to Robert's Rules. This is the best I can do.

We just have to say the discussion of new resolution, the new text is now okay. Are we all set to move on that? Yeah, we are, okay.

Now, Risa, with all that, you can now start talking about these changes.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Great. Thank you, Charlie. Just to reinforce what Charlie was saying, we went through this process of getting -- I think it was a very healthy process of getting lots of input from the get-go on this proposed statement, with the senate weighing in as well, as well as the Academic Freedom Committee and working with Madelyn Wessel. I think it was a productive outcome we got to here.

And we addressed, I think adequately, some of the issues that had been raised with the original version regarding the enforcement aspect of the proposed statement, would it actually be put in effect; the scope of the statement covering the full Cornell community, the issue of whether the provision of the statement about the president's ability to intervene where there's a public order issue, was that strong enough in terms of strong enough limitations on the president to limit the president to intervening only when absolutely necessary, and then what will happen in the future if that occurs, to restore the status quo of the full gamut of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

And then there were some issues raised and discussed in the senate with regard to the harassment and discrimination provisions under the responsibilities section of the statement. I think all of these have been addressed adequately and, as Charlie said, there's agreement about that by the Academic Freedom Committee, as well as Madelyn Wessel. And my understanding from Madelyn as well is that President Pollack is also in agreement that this is a good statement and is in support of it.

What I'm going to do here is just go through the pieces that have been changed. And I really appreciate Charlie having done that side-by-side comparison, because I think it makes it quite clear, and you can certainly refer to that, but these will just highlight for you what's in those side-by-side comparisons. The first piece is the addition of the word "policy" to the actual title, which is a good thing because it makes it more clear that this is more than just a statement, but that it's Cornell policy.

Charlie, I'm not sure if you just want me to run through them, then open it up for discussion. Yeah, I guess that's what I should do.

The next piece is the first change to the actual text, and you can see that it's really very much the same, but there are some additions. The words Cornell respects and is committed to -- respects part is there in terms of the enforcement, that this is an active measure that Cornell commits to taking to respect these principles of academic freedom and rights of freedom of speech and expression, as set forth in the following statement and in other Cornell policies, because we certainly -- there will be other Cornell policies that address these kinds of points as well. That, I think, is both stronger and inclusive.

The second change in the text deals with the public order issues, the potential of the president's authority being used to intervene in a way that might affect freedom of expression and assembly. The language has stayed the same, except for what's in red. I think it's stronger for protection. Rather than "a timely fashion," we're using the term "promptly," making it clear it should go to the Cornell community. And then having the governance aspect built into it, that the community includes the Cornell campus bodies rather than just generally a diffuse notion of the community.

And then the other addition in red here is, I think, very important because it is more than an explanation of what the president did, but the president must also present a plan for restoring, as expeditiously as possible, any rights of expression and assembly that may have been restricted.

This is the provision under the responsibilities section, as is the prior text provision we looked at, under the responsibilities section of the statement. There's the addition of "in the context of instruction or research," because this comes from the

Cornell policies on discrimination and harassment with regard to the particular concerns about academic freedom and freedom of speech or expression.

Then we discussed this at the last faculty senate meeting, that this leaves in the term "discrimination," but it also adds a more general term of protected status harassment, as opposed to the specificity that's in here, just sexual harassment that's taken out. Then there's also the specificity that people were concerned with. Rather than "person," we changed the terms to "individual" or "individuals." I believe that's all of the changes, yeah.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Great, Risa. Thank you. I also want to thank the AFPSF Committee, who have worked on this a lot. It's a great committee. They have all kinds of wonderful perspectives. The meeting we had both with Risa and Madelyn was really inspiring to see how things can work out nicely. Are there questions?

A real important topic. Over time, things change and evolve. We had like a 60-year hiatus, so I guess by 2080, maybe sometime before 2080, we can revisit this document. Buz.

BUZ BARSTO: Thank you, Charlie. You'll have to excuse me for sort of not completely assimilating this. My question might seem sort of naive. How does this sort of statement deal with sort of people who are abusing the privileges of free speech, you know, spreading disinformation, things like that, sort of not using free speech for the sort of good purposes, I guess? We've seen a little bit of that, but I wanted to get some thoughts on that.

MADELYN WESSEL: Interested in the counsel's perspective on that question?

BUZ BARSTO: I would love to, yeah.

MADELYN WESSEL: I think that the place where that is dealt with is actually in the recitation of the Faculty Statement on Academic Freedom from 1960, where it talks about freedom of expression and professional responsibilities. But this statement does not try to establish parameters around faculty expression beyond, I think, involving one of the strongest statements in favor of faculty rights that I've ever seen a university come forward with. And Risa and I have spent some time talking about this.

I think, Risa, that you agree with me, that this is a very strong statement of faculty rights, but there is elucidation of faculty responsibilities. And the major realm in which I would see those kinds of issues play out would not be under this policy, but under the realm of peer review and professional discussion of faculty re faculty.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Could I just say something? There are various contexts in which issues about speech are going to come up. As Madelyn said, not every specific condition can be covered by one statement, but there are multiple provisions in this statement that I think emphasize certain general principles that we are stating that Cornell policy should live by. One of them is the broad scope of academic freedom and freedom of expression, which obviously includes speech in various ways.

The other issue is that, as Madelyn pointed out, that issues of speech come into play when we look at tenure reviews, when we have peer review. Another way that it can come into play, which is I think the way that you're referring to it, Buz, is what is oftentimes referred to as extramural speech.

BUZ BARSTO: That's exactly what I -- thank you for putting it so eloquently. I don't think I quite have that facility with language right now. Thank you.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Well, I do my best. Extramural speech is usually -- is the term that the AAUP uses to talk about speech that's outside of the context specifically of teaching and research, but we might think of as public speech, whether it's on or off campus, whether it deals with our discipline or outside our discipline, whether it's on social media or some other context.

And there is the quotation from the AAUP policy on this in the statement, which discusses the broad scope of such extramural speech protection; but that in rare cases, that there can be actions taken with regard to speech being outside the scope of protected academic freedom for extramural speech. But that's quite rare, and there are going to be evidentiary standards that will need to be met with regard to being speech that shows, in a very, very strong way, unfitness for a position.

I can look at the actual language in the statement. I'm doing it from memory, but I can look at it right now and give it to you. I'll just read you this language. The university further affirms that, quote, a faculty member's expression of opinion as a citizen cannot constitute grounds for dismissal, unless it clearly demonstrates the faculty member's unfitness to serve. Extramural utterances rarely bear upon the faculty member's fitness for continuing service. Moreover, a final decision should take into account the faculty member's entire record as a teacher and scholar. And there's a footnote in this statement to the AAUP policy on that.

BUZ BARSTO: Thank you very much.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Debbie Cherney's had her hand up. Debbie.

DEBBIE CHERNEY: This gets away a little bit from what you're talking about, and I'm a little confused because you changed the word from "statement" to "policy." Does this mean it has a policy number already or are you suggesting that it becomes policy?

MADELYN WESSEL: That was my recommendation to Charlie and Risa, which they concurred with, because I think it provides more strength to this as a statement of policy. It actually continues to have both words at the front, Debbie. My intention is not to convert this into the university's day-to-day policy framework, which I don't think it's well-suited for, but this I would expect would be published on the faculty senate's website and affirmed by the board if the board does choose to do so, as a statement of policy on academic freedom and freedom of speech that the university commits to.

I think it, in that sense, is going to be stronger, I think Charlie stated at the outset, because we added that word "policy," but I don't intend to take it into that always helpful but slightly insane policy framework with all the bells and whistles that we see for other things.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Thank you. Thomas Björkman.

THOMAS BJÖRKMAN: Yeah, I wanted to ask about outreach. It talks specifically about instruction and research, and you just discussed the sort of extramural not part of our jobs kind of stuff, but the outreach part of our jobs can easily get controversial. I make controversial statements to the public about the use of cover crops all the time. I'm not terribly worried about getting in trouble for statements like that, but people in other fields might get into dangerous territory in terms of the blowback against us.

Should the outreach part of our jobs actually be included there, along with instruction and research?

MADELYN WESSEL: As an attorney, I don't know what outreach actually means.

THOMAS BJÖRKMAN: It's extension. Our appointments are in research, teaching and extension.

MADELYN WESSEL: You don't think that this would fall into the definition of instruction? Or how about if we -- I can contemplate scholarly communications or something like that.

THOMAS BJÖRKMAN: Research, teaching and extension are how it's defined in the job descriptions.

MADELYN WESSEL: For some faculty.

THOMAS BJÖRKMAN: On the public side, yeah. Extension is the terminology that's used, but outreach is used more broadly across the university. And I think that's been really a feature of our effort to have the entire university take on the land grant mission, so it's really fairly core to Cornell's functioning, I think, across the university.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: I would just add that I totally agree with you. I'm also involved, as many of my colleagues are, in work that either formally or informally crosses over into what we used to call extension. Now people use the term outreach. My understanding of this is that this would cover it, because if you look at what's retained from the 1960s statement, it talks about classroom teaching, as well as scholarship, research and creative expression, and in the discussion or publication of the results thereof. My view would be that this does cover extension because it's part of

your work as a faculty member. I guess the question would be should it be more specific than that.

MADELYN WESSEL: Well, this section -- Risa, you were citing to an earlier section that we aligned on, of course, which is extremely protective, but this is really talking about interpersonal, so it's really focused on instruction. We added research because there could be a case where someone alleged that in the conduct of research activities, a faculty member engaged in quote, unquote harassment and we're wanting to craft some very strong protections for that kind of faculty undertaking. It's kind of hard to understand a scenario where we'd be talking about sexual harassment, for example, or race-based harassment allegations that would require an addition here.

THOMAS BJÖRKMAN: I'm thinking more where you have blowback from a party exterior to Cornell that wants to shut the faculty member up. Somebody in labor law is likely to get into trouble a lot sooner than I am in cover crops, right? So as far as somebody not liking what you say.

MADELYN WESSEL: I think that is very powerfully covered by the new language that Risa and I agreed upon that comes out of the AAUP on the protections for academic freedom. I really can't imagine a more broad, strong protection than what Risa and I concocted here; mostly Risa on that one.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Okay. Thomas, you okay, then, with this?

THOMAS BJÖRKMAN: Great. Thank you so much.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: I don't see any more hands. It's back to Robert's Rules here. Like to vote on this. Is there a second? I assume somewhere out there, there is. Okay.

Same mechanism. This is only senators. We haven't taken quorum, but we have 115 here. I know we have a lot of visitors today, but I still think we're safe. 65 is the quorum. Please upload to chat yes, no or abstain regarding this text change which is packaged in a resolution. If you support the resolution, you support this new document that Risa and Madelyn and the AFPSF have produced.

Thank you, Thomas, for bringing that up. That's an important point. Teaching, research and extension covers it. While you continue to vote, let's start talking about -- this is our last agenda item, a proposed antiracism center.

What this outstanding group produced is a draft report, and this is emphasis on draft. I'll talk a little bit more about that in a second, but I just want to acknowledge the tremendous role that the students played on this committee. I'm probably a pretty typical faculty member. Yeah, you understand students, but you -- I'm at some distance, and it is very important to understand how our students think about these issues. And I can say very safely that I learned a huge amount in our many discussions from the students on the committee, and also my colleagues. Want to thank them for this. A draft report has been produced. It's online. What I'm going to do here is talk about it.

A reminder of the timeline and sort of the process. It started in July with President Pollack's directive. Neema and I spent a couple of months just doing homework, figuring out the lay of the land and setting up these three working groups.

You heard from two of the working groups at the December 16th meeting. Exactly the same deal; draft report, looking for feedback.

Today you'll get the one from the Center Working Group. We'll then allocate time over the next couple of weeks and meetings to refine these recommendations. This will be a collaborative effort between the working groups and the senate. We'll get feedback, it will go back into the working groups and so on. And hopefully, then, towards the end of March, we'll emerge with a faculty-supported set of recommendations that then go to President Pollack, who will then obviously discuss the proposals with the provost and the deans and others. That's the plan here.

Just a reminder about what part in the president's directive spoke to or addressed the Center issue. The key points here are is their recognition that there's a lot of work on campus being done right now in the units and in the centers on this topic. The key is to amplify that work, and we want Cornell to be well-known for its work in these areas. That's the key idea.

What do we have here at Cornell? That was part of the homework Neema and I did over early in the fall. There are over 25 centers and units and programs that deal in some way or another with topics that relate to race, indigeneity, bias and so on. There's the lineup. I'm sure entities have been left off this, but we have a web page that has all these. You can look at what they do and the programs that they delivered over the fall and previous years, and it's an impressive lineup. It's big. One question is well, gee, aren't we covered already. That's something we'll talk about later on.

The environmental impact statement. How will a new center interact with its neighbors, so to speak? That impact will be positive if there's a level of collaboration that creates new opportunities. This is the whole greater than the sum of the parts thing. However, if the deal is that we are now just adding into the pool another center that's just going to compete for the same set of resources, then that's a negative. It is an absolute negative. In this space going forward, clearly, the senate has to weigh in on these things, but the center directors, those who are well-versed in the operation of their units, this is a critical question, absolute critical question.

It's always important, when you think about things like this, the classic question, well, what goes on at other places. Here's a lineup of peer schools and centers that they have in operation. We have a web page. You can visit any of these and see what's up. For sure, there's a lot of interest, activity and effort amongst our peers in this direction. Before I go on, when you look at these things, there are three reminders that I think about when I look at this lineup. Before I go any further, I'd like to sort of talk about them, because it's sort of like the lay of the land.

At Duke, they have a Center for Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation. I don't know if you were paying attention; three or four years ago, we had this Reliable Knowledge initiative. We were very concerned at the start of the previous administration about taking down various databases that really interfered with scientific research and so on, reliable knowledge. One way of thinking about this whole thing is we want, we need reliable knowledge about race and indigeneity. Truth is what I think

of when I looked at the Duke thing. Very interesting, but I thought well, I don't know just what this is all about.

I'm a STEM guy, and I think a lot of STEM faculty members will say this is important, but it doesn't really touch my corner of the universe. Well, it does. Princeton has an extremely interesting center called the Just Data Lab, and it's a reminder that just data is an issue in the sciences. I put this here just to reach out to my fellow STEM people, that this touches what we do and we have to pay attention.

Third and last reminder. Hopkins has a real interesting program called Hard Histories at Hopkins, where they are sort of going through their history, looking how it has been affected by race and bias. And it's hard. It is hard. We can't shy away from this thing, and it's not supposed to be easy. That's a real important reminder in doing this. Part of it is all about learning to talk with one another about these hard issues.

Let's get on with it. Just a couple of terms. What do we mean by racism? How you experience this depends. We identify black Americans, Native Americans, Latinx, Asian-Americans and other historically marginalized peoples on whom these impacts still persist. There's a breadth here to this, and there are also gender overtones to this, very serious and deep overtones to this. It's all that together that falls under this heading that is going to be the purview of this unit.

Anti signals the necessity of proactive opposition. It's not just being neutral. It's about pushing back. We use that prefix. This is part of the deal, so to speak. The Center has this active component to it.

Here's the vision that has emerged from the group. Again, this is a work in progress. You are seeing sort of a status report that reflects, as best as we can here, the vision that has emerged in the working group. The focus, maybe I should just read it. A Center that focuses our attention on a just and equitable future. It has that dimension to it, but we have to acknowledge how we got here, and that is a very essential feature of this. The Center is a way for the university to express the importance of this.

It has to be institutionally supported, it has to be permanent. It has to respond to current events, but at the same time still have that long-term constant, unrelenting interest in developing racial equality and healing in our society. That is kind of the nutshell. The report embellishes all this stuff. I hope at some point you can read this, read the report.

The name is important. An outsider should read the name and sort of be able to infer what the Center does. Conversely, you want the name to be general enough so that it covers what you want to have it cover. Also, things are going to change with time. If this is a permanent center, what is it going to be doing 20 years from now? Are we covered, so to speak, with that?

Again, I want to stress this is a name in progress, so to speak. As the discussions unfold, maybe there will be a more appropriate name; but for right now, it's more than just being a center for antiracism. We wanted a more general encompassing terminology there in the title, and there you have it.

A little bit now about what will the Center do. This is actually sort of copied in a way from the Society for the Humanities, where they have an annual focal theme. And

then that's announced, and then things follow from that. Faculty come from other universities, maybe on sabbatical, and spend a semester or a year in the Center.

When you think about that thing, it's sort of faculty coming with academic backgrounds, researchers and so on; but in this area, there's a huge amount of expertise outside of academia. We have a great title on campus for bringing in experts, people with experience, and we do that through the professor of the practice program, professor of the practice title.

It's most active like in Engineering and Business, where, for example, I worked for Bell Lab for 20 years, I have all this experience, now I'm going to come to Cornell, teach thermodynamics and interweave my lectures with all this experience I have. We can have that, too, from people who made accomplishments in this venue maybe as a community organizer or working for a non-profit or whatever. We want to somehow open up the door to expertise out there, have them come to campus and teach our students. Then, okay, you're here, you're a faculty member and you look at the annual focal theme. It resonates what I'm working on, I would like to spend a semester in the Center.

Another aspect of the program we want to have here is really devote energy and resources to the pipeline. We need more individuals from minoritized groups in the academy, and we outline a predoctoral and postdoctoral activity.

And then, of course, an operation that gives out small grants to do certain sorts of things, sort of standard things, but very, very important. If you look on, you will see a few more details. We just outline stuff. To flesh this out, that comes at the final stage,

when Mike and Marsha and the deans say we're going to do this. Then you get into the details.

Just to mention a few things here about possible focal themes, and I think the lineup here, we didn't spend a huge amount of time developing these, but the point is to stress that this touches all parts of the university. You may be way over there in CALS doing some kind of climate research. Environmental justice is just around the corner. Or you are in Engineering or Computer Science. These fields, again, should have an interest in the Center activity. Just to stress that through the focal themes, we can connect to all the different corners of the campus.

I talked about this so-called crowded space of centers that we have on campus. The absolute critical thing is that there be collaboration. We have a few words in there about collaboration with core programs like Africana or Latinx or the Indigenous Studies program, and so on. Very, very important ongoing collaborations with those central players.

The university library is very, very interested in this, and they have all kinds of things that they can offer such a center. And then we have units on campus that are deliberately paying attention to policy. And as we'll stress later, the outcome of activism is policy, so there's clear, clear opportunities here to collaborate with some of these other centers.

Then internally, the center has to have enough infrastructure to pull off all the usual things, outside funding opportunities, help in writing grants. We need to make sure that our BIPOC students and faculty are fully engaged in the research life of the

university, so making sure that there's enough infrastructure there to pull that off. And also, since a big part -- it also involves external engagement with students working off-campus doing things. We need to make sure that's a smooth-running operation and so on. A few details in the report on these essential collaborations.

Now I want to wrap up here. It's talking about advocacy and activism. To advocate, what would that sort of mean? Again, I guess I just sort of said this; we have to increase research opportunities on campus and make sure people know about them. This campus is gigantic and it's decentralized, so there's a real purpose there in making sure these opportunities are available and that we increase the number of opportunities; and then, simply, by some mechanism, make sure we have full BIPOC representation in all the academic units and decision-making bodies. One might turn to the Center if you are about to do a faculty search or forming a committee. The Center would be a place there to interact with, to make sure we have the appropriate amount of representation.

Let's talk about activism, and in two ways; one sort of individual, and one is more at the group level. This gets at liberal education. We want our students and faculty to examine the extent of their personal antiracist behavior. This is introspection, and the Center has a role to play in doing that. Changing behavior, changing long-term behavior and so on, that is a real important part of the Center's mission.

And then secondly, I mentioned this before, we want to effect policy, you want to do research in these matters, say, on structural racism and bias, and have that affect the people who make policy on the outside. The two components of activism. What

we're trying to do here is to relate what the Center does to long-standing things that we believe here on campus; liberal education, practical research that affects lives and so on.

Let's just take a quick look at the land grant mission and what the Center's take on it should be, just include those two red words in there. We're supposed to -- this is New York State, of course -- advancing lives and livelihood of our citizens through teaching, research and public service. Well, let's just stress the two things here. One, it's all state citizens. And second, that we can deliver teaching, research and public service that has an antiracist dimension to it is something we have to pay attention to and something that the Center has to drive home.

Finally, we spent a little time on governance, which is very important; but again, the details have to be worked out once the shape of the thing gets clarified a little more. Basically, how the Center is governed must reflect its mission's goals and academic and activist orientation. The Center itself has to be a model for an antiracist, just and equitable future.

That's a quick tour of this. I think we have close to a half hour to talk about this. You can post things in the chat, of course. You can also upload comments to the website and share those anonymously. We want to see more of that. I know we're very busy and we're all trying to -- for everything it's worth, but we've really got to get feedback. And you have those different mechanisms. Let's take a look at what raised hands we have here.

Bruce.

BRUCE LEWENSTEIN: Bruce Lewenstein from Communication. Thanks for this report. I think it's clearly a good start, clearly a lot of work yet to be done. I'm just curious about the educational component. You talked about research, about the themes, but I didn't hear a lot about teaching or the relationship with teaching and just where you are in those discussions.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Right. Remember, the other two working groups were concerned with education. One is the faculty education piece, and you can think of that as really being embedded in the office of OSDD. Then you have the student requirement piece, which we also talked about briefly last December. The idea is that the Center would sort of oversee that operation somehow, loosely speaking.

The Center's basically, as I described here -- I guess I see your point -- mostly talking about research, but we're trying to develop an educational requirement for students, and how do you pull that off. For example, get the faculty who are going to be working on that in the Center, maybe a special semester where they would work on developing curriculum and stuff like that. That's the best I can answer.

Incidentally, we have lots of visitors from the committee, students are here. Please chime in, because I often can't give the best answers to these questions.

Laurent.

LAURENT DUBREUIL: Laurent Dubreuil, Romance Studies. So it's more like a question of clarification. I would have lots of questions and remarks, but I will stick to just one. In the definition of racism, or rather the scope of the definition, to be more precise, I see that in the draft reports there are mentions of racism operating globally

and mentions of both a local and global context, two quotes from the draft; but we understand racism in the U.S. to be -- or Charlie, in your own presentation today, I got the impression that racism was mainly an American affair.

My question is about the international, because as you know, there are some faculty who are not citizens of the U.S. and there are lots of students who are not, and we can all testify that racism is pretty active on all continents, so what do we do with that?

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Let me just say one thing. And Neema, maybe you can chime in here. This has come up both in this group and also in the Student Working Group, which is, I think, predominantly U.S., but you cannot divorce that from the global scene. Neema, you can probably speak much better about that, and maybe anyone else here.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you for that question, Laurent. You're right. What is written in the draft proposal is what the working group kind of settled on in terms of the broad idea, but I think the important part there is to talk about the current situation we find ourselves in, where we live, where we are all living right now, and the importance, then, of addressing sort of -- we talk about sort of raging violence against our black community members. Not just the community, but also black Americans more broadly.

I think our discussions centered a lot around the fact that, of course, like you point out, racism is there across the world, every location one can think about, but where are we going to start? We are going to start very firmly, especially in terms of the

educational requirement, with the circumstances of the places where we're living now, around our campuses.

The idea was that, you know, we're thinking of the Center as having a very long life, much beyond all of us here, and definitely beyond the four years or the six or eight years a student spends at Cornell, and so the idea also was that at different points in time, there would be different engagements.

Right now, we know that there is a huge focus, for example, amongst sort of -- in ACE, there's the Indigenous Dispossession Project, and so that is part of what's going on. It's about trying to both address current challenges and think much more broadly about hierarchies and racisms more broadly, locally and globally. I hope I've answered --

LAURENT DUBREUIL: Yeah, I would just add to that, to me, we are really missing an opportunity if we set aside the transcultural and transnational comparison.

NEEMA KUDVA: We're not. It is very much a part.

LAURENT DUBREUIL: Should be made clear in what really creates the report, whatever note will create the report. Even you might want to have an emphasis at one point in one particular country, one particular era, you really need to take a much more comparative idea of the problem there.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: What would be great, Laurent, if those few sentence that are in the report, where the domestic, international tension is unclear, if you could give us some prose. And also, this goes for everybody, those focal areas. If you can think of a focal area that would perhaps reveal the tension that you see there coming up and -- that would be a very useful thing for us.

I saw David Delchamps, then Risa.

DAVID DELCHAMPS: Hi. I just wanted to add, in response to Laurent's question, to what Neema was saying. I was in the Student Working Group as well, and there were several things. First of all, President Pollack's original request to address these issues seemed to focus on racism in the U.S. And there was a lot of talk in the student group about okay, do we want to broaden from there or not. I think that aside from the fact that we're just starting with it, as Neema was saying, it's so big, as it is, there's so much stuff to talk about, that in order to avoid going a mile wide and an inch deep, we need to sort of stick to something that's manageable, say, for a one-semester course.

You look around. Not only do we have the black-white racism issue, but we also have -- Cornell sits on stolen Indian land in Upstate New York. What does that have to do with us, our origin story, et cetera. And it was hard for folks to imagine okay, let's deal with the whole cross-cultural, international thing in one course, and that's kind of why we ended up, I think, focusing on racism in the U.S. and not taking in the international thing sort of as being too much to bite off at the beginning.

But yeah, I see the Center thing as much more of a -- like the course thing is something we're going to have right away that's going to maybe change over time, but the Center thing is a much longer time horizon, and I'm sure it will evolve in all kinds of directions, like Charlie was saying. We don't know what issues we'll be worried about ten years from now. That's just my take on the student group discussion.

NEEMA KUDVA: And when David says the student group, he means the educational requirement for students. That's the group he's talking about.

Risa, before you speak, I'm wondering if anyone who's on the Center Working Group -- I saw Karim-Aly and others, would like to just sort of address this question as well.

DAVID DELCHAMPS: Just reiterating what had been already said perhaps in another way; first of all, we need to keep in mind that in addition to the charge, this rolls out of initiative of students. They raised this subject and demanded action. And the action was focused on this context. And this context is not excluded from just the nature of the racism, how it's been articulated to colonize both the mind and the body of students. And therefore, Cornell plays an important role in that engagement, of that decolonization. For that reason, we need to focus on this context.

But no doubt, there is value in international comparisons, whether we're talking about North Africa or Australia or whether we're talking about -- in New Zealand, there's a wonderful overlap and information, and the very notion of race is articulated differently in different places, and so that will inform. And that's why there are these themes and these professors of practice that not only are visiting or participating from the United States, but potentially can come from different parts of the world. And the vision is at least a 25- to 50-year vision of how to articulate that. The report is just the first step in setting the boundaries of that, so we could get the kind of input that you are giving us today.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Risa.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Yeah, thanks. So overall, I thought this was a very interesting and thoughtful report. I really appreciated it as something that can really generate a lot

of discussion. Just a couple of things. One is I think that point is absolutely on target, that I think of course the students were the catalyst raising these issues in very important activist ways, but that this Center is going to belong to all of us for a long time, hopefully.

And so it seems to me from the very beginning, we should have a broad perspective; and that to be internationalist in perspective doesn't always mean you work on international issues, but that you see it more broadly. It seems to me that Laurent's point is well-taken and I really welcome seeing that explicitly in here.

The other thing I just wanted to mention was there's the discussion about the land grant institution, and the glaring piece that's not there that many people have raised, including Professor Eric Cheyfitz and other people in the American Indian Studies program and Indigenous Peoples Studies program is that when we talk about the land grant institution, as David just pointed out, it's very difficult to talk about this, nor should we talk about it without recognizing that the reason we have this land is because of genocidal actions towards indigenous people and stealing their land.

I would recommend something in the report itself which is quite explicit about that, that our responsibility in this land grant mission statement is to also be explicit about the nature of land grant institutions.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Absolutely, yeah. The example there was simply trying to fold -- we hear so much about land grant, and then since the fall, this great project that's running out of ACE on this to enlighten us all about the history of the Morrill Land-Grant

initiative and so on, right. We should try to adjust that closing thing there, so that's brought to the fore.

I saw a question in the chat about funding. Remember, at this level, this is a three-tiered thing. It's working groups, senate and then Mike and Martha and deans. Only when you get to that top level will hard financial resources be discussed. We should pay attention to that; but right now, there's no promises or whatever. The key thing is to put forth a compelling idea. That's the best way we can ensure happy results at the top level there.

ABBY COHN: Charlie, I understand that, but I also think one of the issues that gets -- I think we have to really be sure it's not a zero-sum game and we have to understand how there is really, at the institutional level, a commitment to engage in these activities. Even though I understand that it's a multistage process, I would like to see in the proposal some kind of explicit statement of expectation, I guess I would say.

NEEMA KUDVA: Abby, we've talked about it a little bit, and I'm sure all of you can appreciate how much work has gone into even arriving at this place, and I do want to call attention to that. It's a 21-member working group, and they worked through fall, and you know what fall was like for all of us.

If you ever see any of your colleagues or the students who spent so much time on this working group, all three working groups, I think we have to commend our colleagues for putting all that effort in over and above the regular work that we do. We were meeting weekly from the middle of October, the end of October onwards.

You're completely right. We are pushing on that question, but we had to arrive here first in terms of a broad outline of what we want to do, and I do think the next step has to be thinking about the kinds of resources it will take us to be able to do this without causing the harms that Charlie pointed out. It shouldn't take away from the kind of scholarship that are happening right now, the kind of programs we do run. Thank you for that. It is something that we need to --

ABBY COHN: I guess one more model to keep in mind is, of course, the Atkinson Center for Sustainability, and I really hope that the central administration and the board are really thinking of, hopefully, some kind of major, major gift for this. In that regard, I think in addition to the Society for the Humanities, I think the Atkinson Center is also a very valuable model, something that was founded quite recently, and seems to have gotten up and running quite effectively.

NEEMA KUDVA: Yeah. That is tied to a major gift. Thank you for that.

I see two comments, one from Noliwe Rooks and the other from Shelly Wong. And I'm hoping Noliwe and Shelly would feel comfortable bringing their comment to the floor or to the screen.

NOLIWE ROOKS: I can talk. I can't do my video. I was just pointing out, I've been in so many conversations where this thing comes up, this idea that you're engaged in some kind of American exceptionalism or centered on the U.S., when it shouldn't be.

You know, when you say you want some active discussion around what's happening in the U.S., the way I heard it described when Harvard's program was announced was this was specifically for their public policy program. They now have a

requirement that all students take a one-credit class really looking at U.S.-style racism, racism and oppression in the United States because they say though a huge percentage of their faculty teaching and students are, in fact, international, they're here in the U.S. when these various eruptions happen.

As an institution, the folks at Harvard were like we feel like it's not okay to not have anything substantive in our program that makes sure that they understand where they are. That's not to the exclusion of what everybody is doing is something else, but that there's something that you're making sure that you get what racism in the U.S. looks like.

That was just a kind of context for my comment because I've heard students say so often when -- I'm an Americanist, so most of what I teach is about the U.S. -- like they're used to thinking about food scarcity depending on some of the stuff that I work on in Africa. They don't have the facility or -- because their professors have been primarily focused on that kind of inequality, relationship to capitalism, development, U.S. imperialism on another continent.

When you start to talk about it in the U.S., the language and the framework they have is so global that it's almost like you have to be remedial to explain yes, we have a constitution. Native people weren't mentioned in it. Yes, you know, like democracy's -- like you're having to be really basic about the birth of racism in the United States because so often, when the question comes up about it, we jump to let's not make the U.S. exceptional. Let's make sure we understand there's the rest of the world.

I was just saying as a starting point, given the student demands, the moment and some of that reality, I don't see that there's an issue with saying we want to figure out -- we have so much expertise and everything else figuring out how we globalize these issues is just not our issue. When we try to talk about how do you do that in a U.S. context, that becomes contentious, so that was my point.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you. I do think, as David was pointing out, the focus especially in the student educational requirement of really thinking about rooting the discussion, both very strongly and firmly, in the place where we are all living now and where we teach, in the U.S., in Ithaca, in Upstate New York, to root it very firmly here has been a very important part of the conversation.

And I know Shelly's been wanting to speak to this as well, so Shelly, and then Laura.

SHELLY WONG: Not so much wanting to, but --

NEEMA KUDVA: Sorry. I'm putting you on the spot.

SHELLY WONG: It's all right. I think Laurent's point and other people's point is absolutely correct in terms of the absolutely necessity to think in transnational context. This is just to say that the committee has spent considerable time taking up that particular issue.

Certainly, the program I work with, in terms of Asian-American studies, the whole question of immigration and transnational frameworks is an absolutely indispensable part. That's a given. And also, the notion of comparative analytical

framework. I think within the committee, we understood that those were necessities for the larger intellectual trajectory of such an antiracism center.

At the same time, it was also to think about the urgencies of local circumstances and local situations, and the fact that I think there's insufficient knowledge of and attention to particular kinds of racial formations within the nation itself even, and to think about the different kinds of racisms that emerge out of settler colonialism or emerge out of slavery or that emerge out of exclusion or emerge out of any number of material frameworks which have shaped the conditions of or shaped the terms of the racialization of different groups in the U.S. I think that's absolutely crucial to pay attention to because we don't even usually think in terms of racisms, plural, even in the context of the U.S.

Sort of coming back to what Neema and Charlie said in a different context, leeway to think about well, where do you begin. You begin to speak to the urgencies of the situation. They're not urgent just because they're taking place now. They've been here for centuries, but it's to think about that particular context; but obviously, not to neglect the larger issue of comparative or transnational frameworks, to think about the terms of empire. We can't do it looking solely within a national frame, but there are other issues that emerge that have local specificities that I think we need to pay attention to. That's all.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you, Shelly.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Laurent has his hand up again.

LAURENT DUBREUIL: Quickly, just to echo some of the things that have been said, I'm certainly not saying that we should not teach or do research about racism in the U.S. I mean, I did that at several points in my life, but that's not my main focus. But I don't know if it's true the colleagues who work more on the U.S. speak less about racism than we do.

If this is the case, this is a problem that should be addressed, that's for sure, but it's also true that the meaning of the term race depends on historical eras, depends on geographical and cultural context as well. To me, the idea is not to define racism in a U.S. context and then see if that particular definition works in other societies.

I mean, the point is more about having a Peronistic view of what race and racism could be, and then I understand the concern about urgency. I understand there are some students in favor of that center. I'm in favor of that center, that Martha Pollack wrote in favor of that center, but we are the faculty and we should decide what we do with that.

In my opinion, if we keep that center going for decades, which is the hope, I think, then we really need to have a very theoretical, very sophisticated view of what racism is, and that doesn't mean we don't have to prioritize at one point about the U.S. situation; just what I wanted to say.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you.

CHARLIE VAN LOAN: Anyone else like to speak? Well, we're at 5:00, and this has been very productive. Again, I want to stress we're in a period now, maybe three weeks or so, where these three working group draft reports are out there. We want to make

them as powerful as we can, and we certainly have some good suggestions, but we're going to be depending on you to look those over and to send us your suggestions and so on.

I think the next meeting is in about three weeks. At that point, I would guess that some subset or some of the work will be, quote, finalized, and we can begin to act on them and so on.

Just a reminder, we turn off the record button and then go into hallway chat mode, where we just sort of hang around and shoot the breeze. Any of the student visitors here, it would be great if you could hang around with us. In the meantime, have a good rest of the day. It's been a great day at so many levels, and we'll see you soon.

Thank you.