

**Faculty Senate  
November 8, 2023**

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Good afternoon. I'm Jonathan Ochshorn, speaker of the university faculty senate. We start with a land acknowledgment. Cornell University is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq' (the Cayuga Nation). The Gayogohó:nq' are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign Nations with a historic and contemporary presence on this land. The Confederacy precedes the establishment of Cornell University, New York State, and the United States of America. We acknowledge the painful history of Gayogohó:nq' dispossession and honor the ongoing connection of Gayogohó:nq' people, past and present, to these lands and waters. So, the meeting is called to order. We start with the approval of the minutes. This is from October 11th, 2023. The meeting minutes have been posted and distributed online in the form of a verbatim transcript so, in principle, there should be no corrections but, if there are typos or other such things just bring it to the attention of the faculty senate Dean, Dean of Faculty. So, the minutes are approved by unanimous consent. Our first order of business is President Martha Pollack, Computer Science, and President. She will talk for ten minutes and then there will be a 15-minute opportunity for Q&A.

>> Martha Pollack: Yeah. I actually asked Eve this morning -- I think I'm going to talk about 12 or 13 minutes because we have some really important things to talk about. Thank you all for being here. Normally, as you know, I use some of my time to provide updates on Cornell activities. I'm going to forego that this afternoon with two just -- very quick exceptions. First of all, I do want to be sure you know that 84 of our graduate students were recently named to be National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellows. This is 4%, one out of 25 NSF fellows here at Cornell and I just think it's a wonderful testament to you, the faculty who are their

mentors and teachers. I also want to note that the Center for Racial Justice and Equitable Futures will launch this January and I'm especially delighted that the director will be Jamila Michener, Associate Professor of Government, and Senior Associate Dean of Public Engagement at the Brooks School. Many of you know Jamila, she's an internationally recognized scholar working in American politics and policy with a special emphasis on the causes and consequences of poverty and racial inequality and she is just the perfect leader for this new center. Okay. So, beyond that I want to spend my time with you today focused on the extraordinarily difficult moment that we find ourselves in. I want to share some of my thoughts with you and then I really just want to have a dialogue about how we can hopefully work together to support our students, our staff, and each other and move Cornell forward. Four years ago, here at Cornell, we codified a set of core values and they included free and open (inaudible) expression and a community of belonging. Regrettably, we live in a world where creating communities of belonging is not always valued and Cornell does not stand wholly apart from that world. Over the years that I've been president, I've unfortunately had to denounce acts and expressions of hate and bigotry multiple times, both on our campus and off and involving a wide range of targeted identities. On college campuses across the country this past month we have seen too many instances of hatred. On our own campus of course this most notably includes the horrible antisemitic death threats made online to our Jewish students last week. Antisemitism, as well as Islamophobia, racism, and all forms of hatred and bigotry simply cannot be allowed to be part of Cornell. So, we need to redouble our commitment to belonging and inclusion. We will of course continue to respond forcibly to all threats. We had continued to provide support to affected students and faculty and staff as well and we will continue to do what we do best which is to develop and offer education and conduct research that can help advance our understanding of the

causes of and ways to intervene against hatred and bigotry. We have a track record on this, and we'll build on it. Okay. What about free and open (inaudible) expression? Let me start by addressing some questions that I know have come up about the statement that I made in response to the Professor Rickford comment after the Hamas terrorist attack. I think it seems obvious that there can be tensions between being a community of belonging and honoring free and open expression, but we're a university and it's our responsibility to find ways to manage such tensions. To demonstrate how thoughtful people with rich and mature value sets can balance the stresses that inevitably arise among deeply held values. We don't need and shouldn't ban deeply offensive or hateful speech but as individuals and as an institution we can respond to it, supporting those who are affected by it and importantly, when appropriate, offering counterstatements. At the institutional level, we need to do that very cautiously. We need to speak out on behalf of the institution only rarely in cases where the speech is truly egregious. Consistent with this in my time as an administrator only twice have, I provided a counter statement to something that a faculty member had said, my response to Professor Rickford was the second such time. In my judgment his comment was egregious, and it demanded a counter given its inconsistency with our core values. It is important to note that my message also said that the normal university procedures used to respond to complaints about such statement would apply here and that remains true. Further, there's been a lot of information, so I want to clarify two things. It was entirely Professor Rickford's decision to make an apology. The administration was not involved in that, and Professor Rickford decided to request a leave of absence which was then granted. Okay. But beyond that specific instance, I understand the concern that some faculty have about attacks on academic freedom that are coming at academia right now so what I want to do is actually read you the comments on this topic that I made last

week to our board of trustees. Here is what I said to them. I have been very concerned with the growing chorus of voices calling for universities to step back from their fundamental commitment to free speech in light of recent events. This manifests itself in calls to ban hate speech. There is of course no such legal category. Hateful speech is protected speech in the United States as opposed to threats and incitement of violence. I understand and am deeply troubled by the ease with which many people casually toss about hateful expressions. One of the goals of our free expression theme year is to encourage people to recognize that even if they have the right to say something, effective participation in a community and in democracy should leave them to carefully consider their words. But as I've said over the years including when we - - the board and I talked about the free expression theme year, efforts to suppress speech that runs short of direct threats is fraught and dangerous. It's dangerous because it begs the question of who gets to decide what counts as hate speech, and it's repeatedly been shown to be ineffective at best and even counterproductive. In the Weimar Republic, there were multiple laws suppressing the speech of Nazis and yet they rose to power and then twisted those same laws to their own purposes. In fact, some historians believe that the suppression actually increased sympathy for the Nazi cause. One other historical example to keep in mind, fear of communism led directly to the severe speech suppression that defined the Red Scare and McCarthyism, damaging the lives of so many and putting a terrible stain on many of our universities. Again, I recognize how painful hateful expression can be, especially like moments in the one we are in now. I recognize the desire to stop that speech. I sometimes feel it myself and again I want to be clear that there is a difference between hate speech and hate crimes, for example, of the kind we saw with the antisemitic threats, you know, last week. The latter are never tolerated. Also, there can be cases where a faculty member's speech is so extreme that they are deemed by their peers unable to

fulfill their role but the bar for that is appropriately very high. Might we thoughtfully also want to reconsider some issues in the space of free speech in the era of social media? Yes, and that too is intended to be a topic of discussion in our free expression theme year. All that said, free speech and academic freedom are absolutely fundamental both to academia and to democracy and so I am terribly concerned about the sudden calls to rapidly move the line on free speech rather than doubling down on education about how to interact with one another and using our own voices to counter offensive and hateful speech. Of course, including speech that is antisemitic. I also reminded the board that we are a community of more than 27,000 students, 4,000 faculty, and 13,000 staff across our campuses and that we need to remind Cornell of the good that goes on here every day. So, before I open the floor to discussion, I do want to read you one more thing. It's an excerpt from an absolutely beautiful piece. I hope many of you saw it. It was written by Jane-Marie Law, Professor of Religious Studies. I brought copies for the people here. It's called "Everyday Miracle at Cornell." I wish I had time to read the whole essay. I urge you to read it but here's just an excerpt. Professor Law says, "it's unusual to have the university where I teach, Cornell in Ithaca, New York, be in the national news for the same reason for an extended period of time. Usually, national news celebrates the accomplishments of some scholar or some unusual student and it's a flash in the pan. Someone wins a Nobel prize or a national or international award or a new bird or bug is discovered. That's what should be in the news every day about my institution. Amazing things happen at Cornell every day. So, it has been very unsettling to be on the front page of the major media day in and day out for weeks on end, but I don't want to talk about that. Let me instead tell you about a class I'm teaching right now. This class is held in the crappiest classroom I've ever had at Cornell. A basement devoid of any decorations save a chalkboard and a tiny window high up, overgrown not with ivy but with

weeds, some inside the room, because it's in a basement, and walls are painted in off-white with desks that are not fixed and utterly no charm. The room barely fits 24 of us. Among those 23 students are just about every form of diversity one can imagine. Racial, ethnic, socio-economic, nationality, gender, religious, dietary, able-bodied and not, and political. In this small class, I have eight different major religions represented. I have six different countries represented. I have all hues of political persuasion represented. Incredible diversity was the norm here. And let me tell you something really special about my students, particularly this group, this semester. After the massacre on October 7th, by Hamas against Jews and the subsequent invasion of Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces, and the unfolding and unrelenting horror of the high casualties among Palestinian civilians in Gaza my students did not scramble to find a simple position to take. They opened up to one another in remarkable ways and led by our discussions in class and the kind of atmosphere that has actually fairly common in these kind of diverse settings, they listened to one another and showed enormous care for one another that was beyond avoiding uncomfortable conversations. They were filled with self-recriminations that they did not understand the situation with more nuance. They also felt guilty to be continuing to go about their lives and their studies when the world was dealt with so many horrible blows in quick succession. Rather than hardening into ideological positions the view you would have if you read the mainstream media, they got soft and opened to one another. They may have had to be reminded by me that as a class they represent nothing short of a miracle of humanity, but I think the real miracle is the realization that when you put a group of diversity students in a small classroom to do productive work together something happens. Donors and political figures and harsh critics of American academia need to realize that students and the professors and the scholars working at these major research institutions are doing something very difficult and very

rare. We are actually living diversity. We see people building relationships that will last a lifetime with people very different from themselves. People really do discover their shared humanity." To me, Professor Law's words are just a remarkable example of the power of Cornell and the power of our faculty. So, with that, I just want to ask all of you what can we do together to move forward in this time of such pain?

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: If you're on Zoom and have a comment or question, raise your digital hand. If you're in the audience here, just walk up to the front and stand before the microphone and I will let you know if you're ready to go. Why don't you start? And identify yourself and your affiliation.

>> Yuval Grossman: Yuval Grossman, Physics. And for those of you don't know me, I'm also Israeli. So, I really want to thank you for everything you're doing, and I know you are in a very complicated situation and I really, really want to thank you. And, for my question, I think something that was clear to us for a very long time become clear enough for everybody, is that we have a very deep problem, extreme anti-Israeli hate in the faculty. Unfortunately, Professor Rickford is not the only one. We see it every day, many classes. Huge amount of things that are, I would say, not true. I actually talk to our student. Extremely one-sided, and I have been -- go all the way to the level of the vice provost office who provide support to extreme anti-Israeli speech. And I would like to hear from you what are you plan, at the faculty level, actually to first identify that this thing is actually extremely real and has a very real consequence in the real world. What are you plan to actually fight this? Thank you.

>> Martha Pollack: I hear you, Yuval. I think what you're saying is important. I don't deny what you're saying but I think that -- that this is an issue that the community needs to take on. Right? The administration can't come in and say, you can say this, and you can say that, and you can say that. That would, I think, fly in the face of what one typically wants or expects the administration to do and our commitment to academic freedom. I think this has to be an issue that the faculty take on together. I don't know. Mike, did you -- you're the provost. Do you want to add anything to that?

>> Michael Kotlikoff: First I -- I appreciate your comments Yuval and I appreciate your comments previously at the vigil in terms of trying to lower tensions on campus. I think I would say that I also think we have a challenge around political diversity on the campus which is what I think you're highlighting. I would love to see a way in which we could expand the breadth of voices that we hear in our community. I don't think as Martha has said the answer to that is shutting down speech. I think the -- yeah. I know, I know. I know, Yuval. I think the answer is more speech and different speech, not less speech.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: We have Richard Bensele online. Two minutes please.

>> Richard Bensele: Martha, thank you, thank you for those opening comments. I have a different take on free speech and (inaudible) than you do. Some of us, perhaps many of us abhor the remarks that Russell made on Ithaca Commons on October 15th. However, he made them off campus in the capacity of a private citizen. On October 17th, you as president of Cornell University in a formal capacity along with the senior leadership of the board of trustees, quoting,



condemned Professor Rickford's remarks adding that the university is taking this incident seriously and is currently reviewing it consistent with our procedures. No one who read that statement could not fail to see that it -- the central administration was warning Professor Rickford that he might be formally punished for his remarks. There are two aspects to this incident that are deeply troubling. One is the central administration's intervention was a flagrant violation of academic freedom. The second is that formal condemnation by the central administration figuratively and perhaps unintentionally put a target on Professor Rickford's back. Turning him into a potential object of verbal and social abuse. As a private citizen you may, in fact, enthusiastically endorse whatever things you might want to say but you said them as in a formal capacity as president of the university. Given that the central administration's statement might have been motivated in part by an emotional reaction to events in Israel and Palestine would the central administration now consider revoking the October 17th statement and, in that way, renewing its commitment to free speech and academic freedom?

>> Martha Pollack: Thank you for those comments, Richard. Look, I think you and I just agree to disagree on this. My -- my view is very much that the only way a university can honor both free expression and a commitment to being a community of belonging is in those rare cases where the speech is so at odds with being a community of belonging that the administration -- the university has to speak up and counter that speech. Now the second part of that statement -- I know you're making assertions of how anyone can read it, but the fact of the matter is that when we have complaints and there were many complaints made about that speech, we have to respond to those complaints and that statement said that we weren't going to intervene in any special way. We were going to use our normal procedures. I am deeply, deeply, deeply sorry I

thought it was horrific what happened to Professor Rickford after his comments. I'm not convinced at all that it was my response that -- that as you say put a target on his back so much as the comments themselves.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: We have a comment or question -- two minutes. Identity yourself.

>> Chris Loss: Yes, yes. Chris Loss, Food Science Department and I just want to say thank you for having this -- interesting, and very important and obviously I think it's encouraging that we do this so thank you. And I'm -- I just want to say that I think what we can do towards helping this is recognizing when things do work and finding some things that are harmonious, for example, you know, people in classrooms talking together and these are our best models that we have now. So, I just want to, you know -- it's -- it's important to find out bad things that happen and -- these things stick out. That's how our sensory systems work. It's harder to find when things work harmoniously. (inaudible) I didn't come up. Other people have been saying -- but I just think that's important and also to recognize that this has been here for a long time. And it's -- I got a book from my dad. It was in the bookstore, (inaudible) some story by Fineman (sic) and he talks about how he got here. Came into his office. Was in this wonderful academic environment. First guy comes in, tells him something very antisemitic and turns him off. This was back whenever -- I don't know. 50 -- 60, I don't know. So, it's here and it's around and it's a force that we're learning to deal with, and I think it's a good place to do so, thank you.

>> Martha Pollack: Thank you for those comments.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Buz Barstow. Online. Two minutes. Identity yourself.

>> Buz Barstow: Thank you very much. Buz Barstow, Biological and Environmental Engineering. First of all, I really want to say thank you so much for your comments about this issue and I know it's -- it's a really difficult one and I appreciate that you're, you know, sort of stepping into this. My question is totally different topic. Graduate student, unionization. It seems likely that we're going to have a grad student union sometime pretty soon and I wanted to ask what is the administration's sort of thinking on how to engage with that union constructively? I can see that a grad student union could actually be a real plus. It could also be a real negative as well depending on how the relationship evolves. I would love to hear your thoughts on it.

>> Martha Pollack: Well, thank you for that question. I mean I think it's -- everybody in this room knows the MLRB National Labor Relations Board is currently in the process as we speak of holding an election to determine whether the graduate students here, Ithaca, Geneva and Cornell Tech wish to be represented by UE the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America. Throughout the process, our priority has been to ensure that graduate assistants have a voice through voting. Because the election is still underway it just simply isn't appropriate for me to say anything more at this time.

>> Buz Barstow: Thank you very much. Thank you.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Risa Lieberwitz, online.

>> Risa Lieberwitz: Yes, thank you. President Pollack, thank you for coming to the Senate. You know, I -- I wanted to -- to reinforce and agree with what Richard Bensele said about the difference between speech countering a professor's statements which, you know, more -- more speech is generally good and academic freedom covers it, you know. I'm not quibbling with that at all. Clearly, I'm in favor of academic freedom. By the way, I should have said it's Risa Lieberwitz, ILR. But there is a difference between the university president joining with the chair of the board of trustees to target one professor for speech that was clearly within academic freedom, and I also read that last sentence as something really quite potentially punitive with regard to a university review which was not defined at all. But I do think that it's important to recognize that when a president and the chair of the board of trustees speak, they speak for the institution and it's simply not a conversation that we're having, nor did the statement that you made have any reference to academic freedom and the fact that the statements by Professor Rickford were protected by academic freedom in extramural speech. And, and so -- I -- you have -- we have been calling on you from our AAUP chapter on campus as well as others calling on you to make the sort of full-throated support for academic freedom that you did today -- I wish you had said that out to the full campus rather than simply reading it to the board of trustees because this is what we have been asking for. And so, you know, I think it's -- it is very important for you to make that statement to the full campus, and I would like to know if you're going to do that, and I have one other thing to add which is --

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: You're at two minutes.

>> Risa Lieberwitz: Excuse me?

>> Jonathan Ochshorn: You're at two minutes now so wrap it up.

>>Risa Lieberwitz: All right, I just want to mention that since you did wade into many of the issues on the substantive matters that are occurring with the war I would say that as you -- I think well know there's a lot of concern with the fact that in your statements you really just make one nod to Islamophobia and the problems in that area and it's of great concern to many people that there -- if you're going to speak about the hatred in various ways that the sort of targeting of Palestinian and Muslim students, you know, really needs to be given the same kind of attention. Thank you.

>> Martha Pollack: Thank you, Risa. I appreciate your comments. Look, last week we had a really, really horrific antisemitic act on campus that went far beyond anything we have seen and my responses in the past week were with respect to that just as they have been when we have had incidents that have targeted other groups. If you look back through my statements over the years, I have decried antisemitism. I've decried racism. I've decried Islamophobia. I've decried anti-Asian hatred. It is simply not true -- it is not uncommon for groups to tell me that they feel slighted and that I am giving priority to one group over the other. That's simply not how I operate, and I can assure you that my concern is with every single member of this community and any kind of hatred or bigotry that they are dealing with.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Thank you. I don't see any other hands up.

>> Martha Pollack: There's one there.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: We have one more. Okay. Go head. I think we have time for just you.

>> Ruth Collins: Okay. Thank you, President Pollack. I would like to thank President Pollack and the administration for everything that they are doing on -- I think obviously we know as academic faculty that you're in a difficult position and it is up to the faculty to -- to -- to help on this -- on this topic. So, I'm a scientist. As a scientist and I believe I speak for the scientific community we are concerned about the quality of a Cornell education if a Cornell education does include conspiratorial thinking. You know, that would lead to things like anti-vaccine ideology or antisemitic ideology which has a lot in common with conspiratorial ideological thinking and we are concerned about that in the classroom and we want to be of help because we believe that in science you have to really look at the evidence and you also have to go with the explanation that fits the evidence and do everything you can to -- to evaluate the evidence in a -- in a non-biased manner and that is really the basis of an (inaudible) society and democracy as we know it so we're concerned that an Ivy League institution have a commitment to this in the classroom and ways to evaluate that.

>> Martha Pollack: Yeah, I think that's a really good point, right? I mean we're about finding truth and we're about using the scientific method and we're about understanding the world as best we can and again, we're here to help but the quality of what happens in the classroom I largely have to lay at the feet of the faculty. Now, I think Mike makes an incredibly important point about diversifying the voices we have here but again that could cut both ways, right? You don't want to diversify the voices by bringing in people who have sort of fringe ideas about, let's say,

anti vaxxing so I just think it's really important that all of us talk with each other and make sure that -- that we are -- we are trying to uphold these standards. I'm not -- I'm not really sure how else one comes in from the top and says, what you're doing -- Yuval you want to say something. Go ahead, I want to have a discourse. (inaudible)

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Could I interrupt and -- we need to move on.

>> Martha Pollack: Okay.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: And in the future, if you have something to say please stand in line and come up and identify yourself.

>> Martha Pollack: That was my fault.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: We need to move on. Thank you everybody. The next order of business is our senate announcements and updates. Eve De Rosa, Dean of Faculty and Chelsea Specht, Associate Dean of Faculty. Five minutes with another five minutes for questions and comments.

>> Eve De Rosa: Well, first I want to thank President Pollack for coming to the senate and also reminding us that we as faculty have a lot of opportunity to influence the community and to model open discourse and to hold open to the values of academic freedom and freedom of expression. And, so, with that we'll move on with the business of the Senate. So, I just have very little time cause I -- I thought it was very important that we give President Pollack enough

time and then also vice provost of Academic Innovation, Steve Johnson, is going to share resources and tools that are going to be helpful to all of us in the classroom. And so, I wanted to give space for that. And so, next slide, please. Thank you. So, one of the updates that I wanted to make is that we have a new task force. It's nicknamed generated by GPT, ChatGPT is the Teaching-Track Title Taskforce (T4) and so, both Michael Clarkson and Charlie Van Loan from computer science will co-chair this committee and what's important about the structure of this committee is that you have representation from all of the places where undergraduate teaching is happening and so, we are trying to write enabling legislation that will be robust enough to allow for each college to have their own relationship to this potential title. And in addition to this group working on writing the resolution that will come to the Senate we also have the Education Policy Committee or Policies Committee, the Academic Programs and Policies Committee and also the Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty Committees all giving feedback on that ultimate resolution. And the idea is that we will have a conversation -- there's opportunity for feedback, revision, and then we'll bring this to the senate for discussion and a vote. Next slide, please. So, this one has been sitting with us since the beginning of my term as Dean of Faculty and that's the swim test. We -- in the suspension of the swim test we started discussions with Student Campus Life about whether this should be revisited and so this has been work that the Athletics and Physical Education Committee has been working on. They went about this in a very robust and evidence-based way, and they have come up with a revised standard that is basically tied to the Red Cross, and you can see the five standards that those students would meet. It is a lot less rigorous, probably a lot less anxiety-provoking because if you remember we found that students of color and female students were the ones who came into the university not being able to meet this requirement, having the additional burden of taking the



swim test and a lot of them had deferred taking the swim test in this course -- sorry, until their final year and having to pay a penalty in order to graduate. And, so, the committee has come with this revised swim competency rather than swim test and because they have done such a robust job we worked with the committee and Student Campus Life and Director of Athletics to decide that we'll have our students start to meet the standard now. And, in -- so we're going to do a booth and we'll go to different senate committees, have discussions, have discussion inside the senate, we'll get student feedback and so we're working on that right now and then we'll vote on whether to maintain the swim competency requirement or not. And one of the other proposals that the Athletics and Physical Education Committee offered is that transfer students -- if we're going to keep the standard should also meet the standard so that every person who graduates from Cornell meets the standard. And then we have two academic policies that we have been considering and one is the one we discussed last month about removing an incomplete after a student has submitted their work successfully and the others going to be considered today and that's whether to remove the median from the transcript and I can say to all of you here that the students have noticed and so the student assembly is also going to take up consideration of these proposals and discuss it and have gone so far as to organize a round these so that they can have student feedback and data on these. Next slide, please. And then I just want to let you know that these are the committees that -- who need personnel in the next coming academic year and so if you yourself, want to self-nominate or you have colleagues that you think would be great for these different committees, there are links here for -- so that you can know the work of the committee and so with that five minutes I think I'm done and just if there are questions please, put your hand up.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: I see -- only one question online. Risa Lieberwitz.

>> Risa Lieberwitz: Hi, Thanks. Risa Lieberwitz, ILR. This -- the business of the senate of course also includes issues of academic freedom and so Eve what I wanted to ask you is whether it -- well it occurred to me as I was listening to President Pollack read the statement to us that she read to the board of trustees that it would be a good idea to post that statement of what President Pollack read to the board of trustees and disseminate it as I said I -- I had hoped that the university president would have provided that statement to everybody in one of the presidential statements that came out and it -- has not and so I think that it would be great if the -- if the Dean of Faculty's office on behalf of the senate could disseminate it -- post it and disseminate it.

Thanks.

>> Eve De Rosa: Thank you, Risa for that suggestion. I can share that in the Monday message for sure. And I should also share with the senate -- this could have been part of the update. So, a group of about 5 to 6 faculty went to the provost to suggest creating a symposium for academic freedom to educate the faculty about the rights and responsibilities that go with that. And, so, that group is going to come to the University Faculty Committee and have a discussion about what that will look like and planning to gather how we can bring this topic to the senate and to the larger community as well. Thank you, Risa.

>> Risa Lieberwitz: Yeah, if I could just follow up, Since I'm the person -- one of the people who suggested doing that. So, the suggestion and -- I'm glad that we're going to be talking about this at the UFC that the suggestion that I raised with some other people was to have a campus-

wide series of events to really address academic freedom, what does it mean, what's its scope? Where are -- the lines, you know, really thinking about the multiple aspects of it and -- and so I think this has to be participatory planning for doing that and I think it needs to be independent from the university administration so that it can really be faculty-led and -- and my suggestion also to the provost which -- and the Dean of -- and excuse me, the Dean of Arts and Sciences was that this be led by the Cornell AAUP chapter along with the Dean of Faculty's office and that could be the faculty senate as well so thanks a lot for highlighting that.

>> Eve De Rosa: Yes, and definitely as noted I did not mention central administration. This is definitely going to be faculty driven.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Okay, I think we can move onto the next agenda item. Course policies on recording and privacy in the classroom. Steve Jackson will talk about that; ten minutes and I don't see any time allocated for Q&A --. (inaudible)

>> Steve Jackson: I'll try and be short so we can have some questions. Thank you for having me. I know there's a lot going on. This is a specific concrete issue that actually relates to a bunch of the stuff that we've studied. So, next slide, please. To give you a bit of background here is a little bit of what we have been hearing from a variety of faculty. So, we have been hearing concerns around unauthorized student recording of classroom discussions. We have been hearing concerns about student safety stemming from that and potential doxing and harassment, social media controversies, safety of international students who may be expressing views in the classroom that are out of step with home country policies or government. We have also heard

concerns around unauthorized context sharing of faculty comments and there's a longer standing series of concerns around intellectual property related to the (inaudible) from time to time. It's unclear the scale of these so I don't want you to leave here thinking there's this massive wave of these things happening, but we are hearing more reports than we would typically hear and so, we want to think about ways of addressing this. So next slide please. Something on there? Okay. So, one of the things we discovered is that Cornell does not have a clear institution-wide policy on this question. There's a partial exception with this. There was a resolution passed here and also the GPSA and the SA and the Spring 20 which is around the privacy in the transition to online teaching so there are some principles in there I'll come back to that I think are relevant to this. But it is framed primarily in the context of online instruction. There's no -- a statement of principle. There's no clear enforcement process and it's the take us is ongoing university policy is unclear. So, I'll come back to that. Yep. Instructors can set policy at the course level. This is the default. It's not clear how many faculty do this explicitly. I think many faculty have assumptions around this but may not actually say it, may not spell it out. So, this is another level of intervention or verification of the practice. Note that I should -- want to put in the caveat that anything we come up with in this (inaudible) also needs to account for the pro learning uses of recording including accommodation, student accommodations and support in that sense. So, next slide, please. This is the rationale. This is why I think we should care about this and it's very related to the academic freedom, freedom of expression ideas expressed earlier. That's the idea that the openness and privacy of classroom discussions is essential to Cornell's traditions of free inquiry and free expression and something I want to call the freedom of learning which includes the possibility of exploring, trying new ideas, screwing up and not having it come back to haunt you from the outside world 20 years the future or things like that. I think that's essential

to what we do at the university and in my mind is one of the foundational grounds for academic freedom and privacy and the First Amendment. So next slide, please. These principles if we want to tie it back to expressed values of the university, they are all central to Cornell's values of free and open inquiry and expression, community of belonging, and exploration across boundaries. Okay, so a couple of action items. One, short and simple. Next slide, please. Nope, next slide, one more, please. All right. So, the first thing we have done is for those faculty who may not -- may have -- think they have a policy, but they have not actually written this down or communicated this to students, the Center for Teaching Innovation has just this morning put up a set of resources that may be valuable. This includes text, people can take or adapt to insert in future syllabi or share as announcements to classes currently in progress. Next slide -- there's the URL. This is the text. I won't read through it. I think it is pretty good text but of course faculty are welcome to adapt it if have a different sense of these things that they would like to apply at the course level. Next slide, please. Another option that people can take, where circumstances allow is a community agreement approach where faculty bring this question to students and say, this is the situation. What kind of a community do we have? Do you want us to have -- what do you think our rules should be? Coming up with a community agreement that would then be enshrined into the syllabus or faculty policy for that class. Next slide. The other -- so that's at the course level. That's -- that's how we often operate. We can continue to operate in that way, and I encourage faculty to think about this and do this at the course level. I also believe that there may be more we can and should do at the university level in terms of updating and defining university policy on this question. This is a longer-term process. This is not something to be worked out today. But here are some options of flavors that this could look like. One would be to work with the senate, probably also the SA and the GPSA to add, update or extend wider

university policy we could take. Resolutions spring -- from Spring 20 is a starting point for that. I'll show you the development clauses here in a second. This would be about indicating that those principles apply to Cornell learning environments in general, not just online ones but this is standing policy of the university, not a short term covid adjustment and also to clarify processes of adjudication so not just saying here is a principle we all hold. What happens if someone breaks the principle? We could address this explicitly in the Student Code of Conduct which actually has processes of adjudication, appeal, et cetera, and we could add it into general Cornell policy if that seems the right place for this to land. Next slide, please. So here -- yeah, so these are the relevant things from the Spring 20 resource. You can look at that text as we talk and discuss. (inaudible) one more? So, this is the second one is intellectual property -- first one in particular, second one (inaudible) particularly concerned about at the moment. So that's really it, I wanted to bring this -- this set of issues to the awareness of the Senate. I wanted to make people aware of the resources available through CDI. We can share this, I think, through the Monday message as well, of course, I hope you will share this back to your departments as well. And then on the larger policy question I guess the question for you all is do we need a larger policy or are we -- are we comfortable with the course-by-course instructor decides approach? If we do need a larger policy would the Senate be interested in generating or working with others to pursue that kind of approach? I'm happy to would, with any Senate subcommittee or have the senate do it and come -- I don't care how it happens. I'm happy to support it and be in dialogue with anyone who wants to move this forward. So, I think that's it. Questions? Discussions? Experiences?

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: There's a couple of minutes if anyone has a brief comment or question.

Come out to the podium and identify yourself or the lectern. It is not really a podium I've been told.

>> Chris Loss: Thank you. Chris Loss, Food Science. I don't normally attend these things, but this is -- I have to say it's nice -- a pleasant change in my routine. The -- quickly the -- where did I put it? The -- it is good to know that there's a method in place so that we have the -- you know authority and the examples at the course level, so we do have a lot of control and that's good. What is the advice regarding enforcement? So, someone is there, and they are filming, do they also tell us how to respond to that because I wouldn't be sure without -- (inaudible) instructor in class and the other thing I want to know if it is possible is I'm not really familiar with what doxing is. I saw that up there. I know it's not a good thing. I hear it mentioned. I'm curious, has it actually manifested itself, you know, in Cornell through a course, you know, through something? Is there appear example where that actually happened where someone recorded a class and somehow other people were hurt which -- I know doxing is bad, but I don't know exactly what it is.

>> Steve Jackson: Yeah, so -- so -- doxing typically is releasing personal information online and then having people harass the physical address -- it could be email, it could be phone numbers, things like that and having harassment for that (inaudible) and we certainly have had incidences of doxing. I don't know that we have had instances of doxing we can trace straight back to a specific release of information from a class.

>> Chris Loss: Maybe -- (inaudible) it's amazing to me that people can be penalized by putting

information online. People put everybody online these days. It is amazing what you put online so there's other information that some people can now get contextually.

>> Steve Jackson: Yep. Yeah. on -- so -- the -- the guidance that's on the CTI site right now does not include how to respond if you see something happening in the moment. We could look at adding that. I mean I think before we get to that there would need to be some kind of a policy, at least for us at the course level. So, I think at this point in time most professors have not addressed this, and most syllabi don't say anything about it so if a student is recording the intent of that is unclear. It's -- it's not clear that they are violating anything so, once you do have a policy, we -- and I want to make it clear to that there's not -- this is not a monitoring effort. Right? There's nothing behind this that says we're going to now start checking for, you know, cell phones at the entrance of -- I think that's way beyond what we would want to do. What we do want to have in place is a clear policy if there are egregious violation that are causing harm, we have something to come back to and we're not making it up on the spot in the context of the individual case as opposed to the principle -- sort of collectively arrived at procedure. So that's what this is meant to recognize.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Can we make one quick question? We're really at the end of time but if you make it quick, we'll try to -- and identify yourself.

>> Paul Ginsparg (sic): Oh. Paul Ginsparg (sic), (inaudible) same department as Steve. You mentioned the issue of, you know, people being able to speak without being concerned about the outside or the future and you spent -- a certain amount of time worrying about 20 years from



now. In the context of this doxing discussion and what I was really thinking about all long is the potential for some in class discussion to appear online and seeing what happens when things appear online -- people get targets on their back. They get harassed and all of the rest of you know, the marauding masses comes down on them and so I think that's the thing we really have to be concerned about and you know, with regard to this question of how is it enforced? Most of the enforcement mechanisms will be too late. Someone's life will already be destroyed after they have been doxed and online and, you know, have this target drawn on their back, whether justified or not so that's something we would want to keep in mind.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Thank you. Okay. Okay. We're going to move onto the next agenda item. TCAT Service Agreement, Bridgette Brady, Director of Transportation and Joel Malina, Vice President for University Relations. Are they here or online? Right here. Okay. We have five minutes and then another ten minutes for Q&A.

>> Joel Malina: Great. I'll begin while Bridgette is walking down. Thank you for this opportunity. So, as many of you may know, before the early 90s there were three separate transit entities. One operated by Cornell. One operated by the city of Ithaca, one operated by Tompkins County. They came together as the Tompkins Consolidated Transit in the early 90s and it has been a tremendously important resource for many of our faculty and staff and our students. It is funded in a number of ways. The city and Cornell and the county are the three underwriters of the entity and we each pay an equal amount in -- about a million dollars a year but then on top of that Cornell pays an additional amount through an MOU that essentially enables us to provide bus service for our faculty and staff free of charge to provide all first year students ability to ride

TCAT free of charge and all students on the evenings and weekends to do so. Historically, I've been here ten years, until what you are going to be hearing about today this agreement was really focused on ridership. Pre-pandemic levels of ridership as we're all aware TCAT has had significant challenges in terms of service and so Bridgette Brady, our remarkable Director of Transportation Services will talk in detail about a new four year agreement which is based on service levels which provides the same level of funding from Cornell but provides incentives that TCAT would receive more dollars for meet certain service levels and if service levels are failed to be met would receive a lower amount. Bridgette.

>> Bridgette Brady: As Joel mentions we did have a loosely associated to ridership. It actually was (inaudible) directly associated to ridership and what we decided to do because TCAT is struggling, and we want TCAT to be healthy. We want to help them. Transit is the backbone of the healthy transportation system and without it we have seen some of the -- the discomforts. It is a four-year agreement based on expected target service levels and until they reach that -- and it is 2019 levels, base payment at that and until they do reach that there will be some -- as you say, some discounts sent to Cornell. So, we don't want that. We want TCAT to exceed that and in which case we chose five routes in which impact to Cornell community the most and that would be the 10, the 30, the 81, 82 and the 90. 10, and the 30 are adjacent and then the 81, 82 and 90 are the circulars and our expectations are 2019 levels. We will start measuring that in the spring semester, so we have seen some improvement from TCAT. Again, we were operating on very, very low levels any ways so some improvement, bus pull outs are all happening now. We are not missing any trips. There's still a lot of work to do. We really help that TCAT can pull that together. It'll be slow. It'll be absolutely a slow process for them to come back. They had quite

the meltdown after the -- after the pandemic. Four years and we do intend to increase the base rate and we will do so more than 3%, written in the contract, if again, hopefully, TCAT can rise above the 2019 numbers. Questions?

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Questions or comments? If you have a question or comment here just inside, just come down to the lectern or the microphone.

>> Eve De Rosa: I am going to ask everybody who has emailed me about parking and TCAT please bring them forward. I'm not going to represent all of the angst that I hear.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Identify yourself and try to keep it to two minutes.

>> Chris Schaffer: Yeah. Hi. Chris Shaffer from Biomedical Engineering. I'm curious why the university has stuck with a policy of only providing bus service to first year students as opposed to also graduate students and also other undergraduates. I certainly hear a lot of complaints about this from students in my classes and I just wonder like, how much does this cost if we are trying to help TCAT anyway, maybe this is a place where expanding service is a win for many.

>> Bridgette Brady: To the -- the question about why wouldn't we make TCAT free for everybody. There are two reasons. It is financial. It is not something we can work through that - - if we can figure out fiscal service level but the others -- does TCAT actually have the service -- enough service levels to provide to everybody? So, we have this -- if we could afford it, could they put it -- enough out there right now? So, not -- something that we have taken into

consideration and will continue to evaluate.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Okay. Not seeing other questions, I think we will move onto our next agenda item. An introduction of a proposal in support of a resource to discontinue posting median grades on student transcripts. Lisa Nishi, ILR and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Are you online?

>> Lisa Nishi: I am online. Good afternoon

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: About ten minutes, Lisa, and then ten minutes for senate discussion.

>> Lisa Nishi: Okay. Thank you. So, I'm here to introduce the resource to discontinue posting median grades on a student transcript. This proposed resource is grounded in quite an interesting string of prior resources, both to the faculty senate and student assembly so I'm going to walk you through that because I think it is really important context. Okay, so first, 1997, resource on the -- the first resource was passed by the faculty senate to post median grades in two locations. So, on student's transcripts and the university registrar's website and there were two underlying objectives. One, to encourage students to take courses with low median grades, and two, to curb grade inflation. In 1998, after the resource was passed, median grades did start to be posted on the OUR website but not on transcripts. That didn't happen until 2008 due to technological obstacles. Next, please. Then in 2006 the EPC introduced a resolution to remove median transcripts from the OUR website until those median grades could also be posted on student transcripts. The EPC believed that the dual postings were inextricably linked but the -- the

resource failed. Next, please. In 2009, one year after the posting of median grades on transcripts had begun for students matriculating in 2008, the EPC again introduced a resource to remove median grades from the OUR website. The rationale this time was that the publicly posted median grades were being used by students to select courses that give high grades and was also contributing to grade inflation, the opposite of the intended -- the purpose of the 1997 resource. This resolution, was unsuccessful in part because the faculty senate wanted more time to assess the success of its original plan which was to post the median grades in both locations which had only recently been effectuated, right? This is 2009, just one year after the median grades started to be posted on transcripts. Okay, then in 2011, a resource similar to that in 2009 was actually passed. This time the resource was based on a research study conducted by two Cornell faculty, using Cornell data which showed that the publicly available nature of median grades actually contributed to rather than discouraged strategic course selection, and it accelerated grade inflation. I'll say more about this study on the next slide. Important to note at this point though that the resource did not address postings on transcripts which therefore continued even though median grades were no longer posted on the OUR website and the two types of postings were believed to be inextricably linked. Next, please. 2011, there's a Daily Sun Article published protesting the median grades on transcripts. The article argued that whether the median grades were low or high, median grades on transcripts opened the door to interpretations that can really negatively impact Cornell students who are on the job market so, for example, students who earn high grades feel diminished by high median grade and students who challenge themselves with more difficult classes but under perform, you know, feel like they're classified as below average academically. Furthermore, the article noted that classes with multiple sections with different instructors, published a median grade across sections even when median grades vary across them

and that is not fair. In 2023, this year, another article was published in the Daily Sun echoing the sentiments of the 2011 article. Next, please. Okay. So, in 2011, soon after the OUR median grade postings stopped one thing that's really important to understand is that a practice of crowd sourcing started and it still continues today where students are essentially using the median grades that they get from their transcripts, crowd sourcing them and sharing them on Reddit. Students report that these spread sheets readily available and well known and they continue to promote grade driven course selection. In 2018, now we are moving into Student Assembly resources the student assembly sponsored a resource calling on the faculty senate to reinstate the reporting of median grades on the OUR website and this was prefaced on the idea that if they're going to be on transcripts, they must also be on the OUR website establishing a concept known as truth in grading. That is if median grades are recorded on transcripts for grad schools and employers to view students want advance notice of what the median grades are likely to be. The Faculty Senate did not take up this resource. Right now, there is another Student Assembly resource under discussion. This time the resource calls for the university to discontinue posting median grades on transcripts. So, the student assembly's efforts in both resources really demonstrate that just like the faculty senate had originally pointed out the dual postings are linked and either both should be in place or neither should be in place. Next please. So, the 2011 resource that was passed, it stated that the public publishing of median grades for all courses on the Cornell website is used by students to select courses that give high grades and this practice is contributing to grade inflation at Cornell and the practice of posting median grades on the web is being exploited by external websites to match median grades to specific professors allowing students to choose courses or sections with higher median grades. And, as I mentioned earlier, this resource relied heavily on a study that was published which Cornell faculty, they

utilized a large data set of grades, assigned between 1990 and 2004 and they separated them into two samples. A pre and post policy change comparison and they found that the shared courses with the median grade in the A range increased by 16% after the policy was implemented and the shared students enrolled in such courses increased by more than 42%. They also found that strategic course selection affects students relative standing because stronger students are more likely to choose difficult courses, that is those with median -- low median grades, making weaker students fare even worse comparatively. Next, please. I've covered this so I'm actually -- I think skip this in the interest of time. Next, please. Okay. So here are the reasons for the recommendation to discontinue posting the median grades on transcripts. So, one, while the faculty senate did seek to address the problem of strategic course selection by discontinuing the practice of posting median grades on the OUR website the continued posting on transcripts results in the exact same behavior which is antithetical to Cornell's, you know, fundamental policy of principle of learning for the sake of learning and the assumption here is that if median grades are no longer included on transcripts, students will not be able to recreate the median grade reports and thereby, you know, it'll inhibit strategic course selection. The second point is that median grades convey to students that their standing vis a vis other students is an important measure of their achievement and perhaps in some ways more important than the mastery of learning itself and this fuels a culture of competition which was identified by the 2020 mental health review report as being a source of unproductive strain for our students. And, you know, also according to Cornell's grading system as adopted by the faculty senate grades are assigned according to achievement based, rather than norm reference criteria and so therefore there's no reason why letter grades can't speak for themselves. Third point is that we are an outlier, only four -- that includes Cornell of 71, 71 AAU institutions post median grades. The only other Ivy

league that does this is Dartmouth and they're currently in the process of eliminating this practice. Fourth point as I shared previously is strategic course selection dispassionately affects some students more than others. Next, please. And, you know, as is evident in the various Daily Sun articles that have been published students are really disheartened by this practice. They report that it really demoralizes them. It devalues the academic accomplishments in the classroom. It detracts from learning and like I said it reinforces student competition and it discourages academic risk taking and exploration. Students report that the practice results in inequities in courses with multiple sections as I indicated before and the last point, I'll say is that they're also commercial websites where students can purchase this information and so this median grade information is available for a fee, advantaging those students who are able to pay these fees. Therefore, next, please. Be it resolved that the university discontinue posting median grades on transcripts. Thank you.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Thank you. There are questions or comments from the audience just move up to the front of the room. If you're online raise your digital hand. We have a raised -- of in person here. Nobody wants to use the lectern. Okay, go head, identity yourself and your affiliation.

>> Bill Katt: Bill Katt, Molecular Medicine.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Go head.

>> Bill Katt: Sorry. Given that once things are on the Internet, they're basically on the Internet



forever, how will getting rid of the marks on transcripts reduce the availability of these, basically the OUR grades being available?

>> Lisa Nishi: Well, that's a good point. They are there forever but I think the idea is they become kind of old news, right? Or -- or -- not -- not based on current data.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Go ahead. Identity yourself.

>> Mike Thompson: Mike Thompson, Materials Science. There are a number of issues in the kind of points raised of the removing it that will not change with the elimination of the median grades from the transcripts. The students will still find ways to identify the median grade or the high and low grades in a course independent of whether it's published on the site or not. The others that the challenge and the demoralization is going to occur by grades that are given and as faculty that's just our responsibility. Some students are going to excel in learning material from their capabilities and others are going to be challenged by the course and that's reflected in the grades independent of what it is-- whether the median grade is known for not, if we are honest and in assessing and giving those grades. The other part that I did not hear is anything from the constituents that utilize the transcripts to assess and evaluate students. What impact or how has it been used by careers, and by companies that are interested in evaluating our students and assessing their -- their -- their achievements in the class?

>> Lisa Nishi: Thank you, Mike. I think it's absolutely possible that there will be continued to be some word of mouth sharing of -- of grades but median grade data would no longer be

available, it would be a difficult -- really difficult for students to recreate spread sheets like the median grade report to drive course selection. It's a good question about graduate -- graduate schools and employers but given that they don't rely on this information from -- for students from other institutions since we're such an outlier I can't imagine that doing away with them would end up hurting our students in any way. In fact, it's more likely that it disadvantages them right now.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: We have a question or comment from Courtney Roby online or. Are you still there?

>> Courtney Roby: Yes. I am. I actually put my hand down because Mike said most of what I wanted to say. It does seem, you know, I take your point, Lisa, that perhaps employers and grad schools don't use that information. It does seem like a very useful way to encourage students to seek out greater challenges. I can't imagine why they wouldn't want that information. It's -- you know, now that Latin honors have been detached university wide from honors level research projects and our, are awarded only for GPA, students are so strongly incentivized to seek out only the easiest possible courses and this seemed to be one of our few remaining ways to encourage students to seek out greater academic challenges. So, I'll be sorry to see it go but it looks a bit inevitable so --

>> Lisa Nishi: Well, I think what you just expressed was the original feeling, right, behind the 1997 resource was that it would do what you just said and encourage students to take difficult courses because the median grade would show that it was difficult for everybody, not just me,

but the data just showed that that's -- it's not -- it's not how it turned out.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Sarah Pryor, online.

>> Sarah Pryor: Yeah, I -- I was just looking up online and as you -- as you already articulated, grade inflation is absolutely a universal problem. According to Harvard, more than 80% of its students are graduating with A grades so, while I understand that we don't want students to find things stressful I fear that we are -- we are losing any ability to try and differentiate between students as the grade distribution narrows and that we are -- in a way we are losing our ability to indicate truthfully and fairly how they have performed so maybe the median grade doesn't help to do that -- to tell them that they're above or below average or maybe we don't want to ever admit that anyone is below average but how are we going to get a handle on this challenge?

>> Lisa Nishi: Yeah, it seems the point that you're making is about grade compression, and I think that's something that's -- it's related but in a way a separate issue for the faculty to take up in terms of the -- the grading scale that is used by faculty in courses, whether or not these grades are published -- the median grades are published on transcripts.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Buz Barstow, online.

>> Buz Barstow: Thank you very much. Sarah, I just -- I just want to second what you said. I think this idea of differentiating between students is really, really important. You know, we do have to figure out who the best ones are. I mean, it's no fun but I think we do. I think it's sort of

almost an imperative. I guess the -- the challenge though is really figuring out a way to sort of -- you know, do that without compromising people's dignity. I think we may be lose sight of the fact that someone's GPA is not the sum of their character, right? There's -- you know -- I guess -- people have souls, right? And, you know, how do you celebrate that without, you know, reducing it just to their grades. I don't know the answer.

>> Lisa Nishi: You know -- but I don't think that getting rid of the posting takes away the ability for faculty to differentiate between students and, in fact, right now students don't -- I mean so -- I'm going to sound like I'm contradicting myself because, on the one hand, you know, these are available on Reddit but for a class a student actually takes or a course they actually take they don't see the median grades until much later when they first see their transcript, right? So, they're not getting it in the moment in the -- this -- this is separate from in the course, in the moment, getting feedback from faculty about how they're doing. Does that make sense?

>> Buz Barstow: Yeah.

>> Lisa Nishi: I feel like we need to separate the two. Thank you.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Ashleigh Newman, online.

>> Ashleigh Newman: Hi, Ashleigh Newman, Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences and I just wanted to briefly say I'm in full support having gone to undergrad here I was in that period that you highlighted that it was available to students but not on the transcript yet and it was

definitely used in the manner in which you said and I think it's gaming the system and the fact that people can pay for it, it just all sounds very ick to me and I think removing it from the transcripts and I agree faculty can grade in their course and create a stratification of students based on assessments and -- but putting it -- slopping it at the end of the transcript I think just is, yeah, I don't support it so, I'm happy this is coming forward.

>> Lisa Nishi: Thanks, Ashleigh.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Okay, I think we're ready to move onto our final agenda item which is known as the good of the order where faculty speak on topics of interest but not necessarily relating to motions on the table. Today we have senator Yuval Grossman from Physics and try to keep it to five minutes, please.

>> Yuval Grossman: Okay, thank you very much. So, what I feel we really need right now is to calm down the campus. I mean, the situation is extremely bad. I've been in contact with many students, and we are in a really bad situation. Okay? So, what I like to do -- I like to share with you a speech that I gave in -- two weeks ago in an event that we have that I try to send the message that we really need to calm down the campus. So, here's my speech. My name is Yuval Grossman, and I am a professor of Physics at Cornell. I was born in Jerusalem, grew up in (inaudible) seven miles from the Lebanon border. I am all too familiar with the horror of war. My father was killed when I was five in the war with Syria. When I was nine, terrorists came from the sea into our street and murdered a friend of mine from school. For a year after that event every night before I went to sleep my sister, mom and I blocked the entrance door with a

big table. I remember my mom telling me that this big table would protect us. How do I cope with my personal loss? After years of pain and inability to act, I choose the route of peace. I have learned Arabic and made many Palestinian friends. I have joined the (inaudible) family forum, a joint Israeli Palestinian organization of people who have lost an immediate family member to the ongoing conflict. I have been teaching Physics in Palestinian school. I did the little I could do to make our world a better place. And then came October 7th. The pain -- the pictures, a daughter of a High School friend of my wife was murdered at the festival and a few of dear friends of mine is hostage in Gaza and the list goes on. The wounds of the past were reopened. In the last few weeks, I've been full of pain. I can hardly eat or sleep. I know many of you are in the same state. It is the darkest era of my life. Unfortunately, even our campus became a place full of hate. We all heard the words, each of them is like a sharp sword in our hearts. We saw the gravity. We saw a professor taking down one of our posters. We saw the Native American Program at (inaudible) organizing an inflammatory event. When I was standing here a few days ago with my small flag to show support and love a student flipped me off. I ask my dear friend -- a Palestinian from Nazareth what we would like to say to the Jewish students at Cornell and that is what he told me. In particular in the moment of desperation one must believe that after the war peace will come. Now more than ever, I believe in peace. A real peace. We are not born here to fight each other. We were born here to love each other, to understand each other, so that we will live peacefully together on that land. To make the dream of (inaudible) come true in Israel will take time, yet I hope that we can do it now here at Cornell. I'm standing here with a plea to my colleagues. We are professors in one of the best universities in the world. We are here to set examples to our students. The world is watching us. Let us show respect, compassion, and understanding. I humbly ask you not to use hateful words during

this time. Even if we have the right to do so. Despite all the personal pain, that we are all experiencing now it's our time to lead and support our students. I would like to send a message to all our students, I am here for you. I will talk to you and support you. It can be in English, Arabic, or Hebrew. I do not care where your pain is coming from. My job now is to step -- to help you deal with that pain. I will conclude with words from a famous Israel song by Shalom Hanoch. The name the song is "Walk Against the Wind" and the words are "it is always darkest before dawn." Thank you.

>>Jonathan Ochshorn: Thank you. Our meeting is now adjourned.

**[End of transcript]**