

Cornell University

The Cornell University Story

A Holistic Approach to
Diversity and Inclusiveness

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Background

Cornell University, located in Ithaca, New York, is a privately endowed university and the federal land-grant institution of New York State. It is a member of the Ivy League and a partner of the State University of New York. The university is comprised of seven undergraduate units and four graduate and professional units in Ithaca; two units, one medical and one professional, in New York City; and one unit in Qatar. The Ithaca-based student body consists of 13,625 undergraduate students and 5,893 graduate and professional students, supported by 7,215 part- and full-time nonacademic staff and 1,578 regular faculty. Of the undergraduate student population, 50% are women and 28% are minorities. The graduate and professional student body consists of 43% women and 15% minorities. The staff and faculty population consists of 50% women and 11.6% minorities.¹

The university operates under the direction of the Board of Trustees through the leadership of the president, vice presidents, and deans. The university's commitment to diversity is reflected even at these levels, exceeding the national average for women. According to the Catalyst organization, as reported in the *DiversityInc* online magazine,² in 2003 women accounted for 13.6% of Fortune 500 board members. The minority

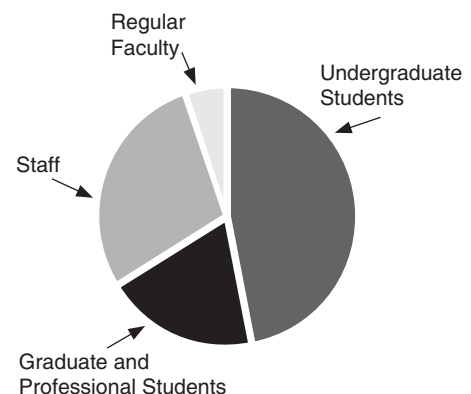
representation of Fortune 500

board members in 2002, as reported in *DiversityInc* April 2002, was 14% Latino, 11% Asian, and 5% African American. Cornell's board consists of 64 voting members. Of the 64 members, 28% (compared to 13.6% in the Fortune 500) are women and 16% are minority. In addition to membership, women and minorities lead

some of the most prestigious committees on the board, including the Committee on Land Grant and Statutory College Affairs, the Committee on Board Membership, the Committee on Academic Affairs and Campus Life, and the Committee on Alumni Affairs and Development.

Cornell's senior leadership consists of the president, the provost, 11 vice presidents, 18 deans, and 10 vice provosts. Of these positions, 39% are women, including the provost, representing the most senior level academic position in the university, and 7.5% are minorities.³

Who Works, Teaches, and Studies at Cornell?



Data from 2004-05, not including Medical divisions. Staff includes regular full- and part-time academic employees in instruction, extension, research and library as well as regular full- and part-time nonacademic staff.

Cornell's board, consisting of 64 members, includes 28% women.

History

Unlike other organizations that began addressing diversity and inclusiveness in the 1960s and 1970s, Cornell's commitment began at the university's inception, with the statement of co-founder Ezra Cornell in 1865: "I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." At a time when the American Equal Rights Association was being formed as a coalition between women's rights and anti-slavery organizations (1866) and prior to the adoption of the 14th Amendment in 1868, Ezra Cornell and co-founder Andrew Dickson White were committed to creating a university that was open to all individuals regardless of race or gender. In a letter dated February 17, 1867 to his granddaughter Eunice, Ezra Cornell stated: "I want to have girls educated in the university as well as boys, so that they may have the same opportunity [sic] to become wise and useful to society that the boys have." This commitment to diversity and inclusiveness was further reflected in Andrew Dickson White's 1874 statement: "if even one [student of color] offered himself and passed the examinations we should receive him even if all our five hundred [white] students were to ask for dismissal on that account."⁴

"I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study."

—Ezra Cornell

Cornell's commitment has continued through time, as reflected in its trend to continue to be a first in addressing diversity and inclusiveness.

- In 1872, Cornell was one of the first co-educational institutions in the east;
- In 1873, Cornell University's Sage Chapel was the first voluntary chapel of a major American university;
- In 1906, Cornell was the founding institution for Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first undergraduate African American fraternity;
- In 1916, Rho Psi, the first Asian fraternity in the Ivy League, was established at Cornell;
- In 1929, Cornell was the first university to have an interfaith department for religious affairs;
- In 1936, Cornell was the first university to award a Ph.D. to an African American woman (Flemmie Kittrell).



Cornell's first undergraduate Asian fraternity, Rho Psi.

For some time, Cornell University has had organizations and offices in place to address the needs of its diverse population. The Work and Family Advisory Council, which was formed in 1990, was charged with investigating the challenges faced by working families. Since that time, the council has been instrumental in providing feedback in the development and implementation of the university's Child Care Grant Subsidy Program for faculty, staff, and students, assisting with the creation of the University Summer Day Camp program, implementing a flex policy at the university, and establishing an adoption assistance program for faculty and staff.

Another group, the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women (ACSW) has been in existence since 1972 with responsibility for making recommendations to develop and maintain a climate at Cornell University, and among members of the Cornell extended community, that will ensure equal access, opportunity, and protection for women in all areas and activities. The ACSW has an annual Constance E. Cook and Alice H. Cook Recognition Awards ceremony. This award honors individuals (male or female) who deserve recognition for their contributions to the Cornell community, especially those who have influenced women and/or women's issues. The awards are named in honor of Constance Cook, Cornell's first woman vice president (now an Ithaca attorney), and the late Professor Emeritus Alice Cook, founding member of ACSW.

Comprised of 25 affiliated communities, the Cornell United Religious Work (CURW) was established in 1929 to offer programs of worship, study, and social life, as well as opportunities for students to engage in interfaith dialogue.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center was established in 1994 to coordinate the efforts of the entire Cornell University community, ensure the inclusion of all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, and eliminate heterosexism and gender-identity oppression. The resource center affirms lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender identities and lives, and provides education, outreach, programming, program support, consultation, community development, visibility and advocacy.

In addition to these organizations and offices, the university has established two offices to lead the efforts in addressing equal opportunity, affirmative action, and diversity at Cornell. The Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality was established to:

- 1) assist with the development of diversity initiatives throughout the university;
- 2) respond to complaints of employment discrimination and discrimination in education;
- 3) assist with implementation of Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- 4) implement the university's affirmative action programs for academic and nonacademic staff; and
- 5) develop programming for the university's work/life and work/family initiatives as part of its efforts to retain a diverse workforce.

“I believe that a diverse work and educational environment benefits not only the individuals for whom opportunities are expanded, but also the entire university community and that our efforts have an impact locally, nationally and internationally. I also believe that Cornell, as an institution of education and discovery, has a responsibility to engage with the public through public service, outreach, economic development, technology transfer and public culture to realize the potential of all our people. Cornell has a proud record in these areas and a legacy of leadership in diversity that I am committed to continuing.”

**—President
David J. Skorton**

The Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development was established to:

- 1) assist with the development of diversity initiatives throughout the university;
- 2) consult on issues related to affirmative action and diversity;
- 3) coordinate affirmative action compliance in academic searches;
- 4) implement strategies for the retention of women and minority faculty; and
- 5) assist with addressing dual career issues for academic personnel.

In January of 2000, Cornell University renewed its commitment to diversity and inclusiveness by developing a new vision in its statement, “Open Doors, Open Hearts and Open Minds,” which was endorsed by the university’s board of trustees as well as all governance groups.⁵ This statement is distributed to new employees, in the form of a bookmark, and to new students, in the form of a mouse pad. In addition, posters of the statement are displayed throughout the university.

In November of 2001, Cornell established the University Diversity Council, consisting of 19 members and appointed by Provost “Biddy” Martin, with a mission of helping to build a community, “where the attitudes and actions of people promote mutual respect and civility, so that all can fully participate in the education, employment, and social opportunities of the university.” The council is responsible for identifying barriers to achieving greater diversity and inclusiveness at Cornell, providing forums for discussion of diversity-related issues and ideas, communicating programmatic progress in achieving diversity and inclusiveness, and advocating work/life “balance” for the university’s diverse faculty, staff and students.

The fifth anniversary of the diversity and inclusiveness statement was celebrated through various week long campus-wide events designed to reignite the dialogue about the statement and to recognize the progress that has been made. The academic colleges, professional schools and units participated in the “Open Doors on Campus Project: the Diversity Archways” where 15 large-scale archways were installed all across the Ithaca campus and each participating group decorated an archway in a manner that reflected their diversity. The University Diversity Council also sponsored a diversity fair that attracted close to 70 exhibits that highlighted the diversity that exists on campus and in the local community. Discussion sessions were opened to all students, staff and faculty, offering an opportunity for the community to reflect on its progress and comment on the priorities ahead. The close of the celebration week was marked by a visit from Ted Childs, vice president of Global Workforce Diversity at IBM, who spoke to the Cornell community about leadership and diversity and allowed for a question-and-answer session. The activities successfully sparked interest and dialogue about Cornell’s commitment to a diverse and inclusive environment.



“ Each member of the Cornell community has a responsibility . . . to support a more diverse and inclusive campus in which to work, study, teach, research, and serve.”

— Excerpt from the “Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds” Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness

Cornell's Holistic Approach to Diversity and Inclusiveness

Cornell's approach to addressing compliance and diversity issues is to do so holistically. As a result, programming is developed to be as inclusive of all populations as possible. Part of the approach includes taking steps to make sure that the Cornell community is continuously reminded of the university's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness. As a result, "diversity" is a main feature of the university's home page on the web, at <http://www.cornell.edu>. In the September 24, 2003 edition of *DiversityInc* online magazine, the Ivy League universities' web sites were graded for their demonstration of a commitment to diversity and Cornell's web received a grade of "B"—the highest grade received by any of the Ivy League universities.

Another diversity concern that has recently received national attention is that of the aging population that makes up the U.S. workforce. Cornell has received recognition by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) as one of the best employers for workers over 50. Out of 145 applicants from for-profit and non-profit organizations, Cornell ranked fifth in 2005. Annually, the association honors 50 employers in the United States and evaluates each employer in five main areas: recruiting, training and development, health benefits, pension plans, and alternative work arrangements. Other areas considered were workplace culture and innovative practices. Cornell received a score of five (out of five) in each main category, and is the only college or university in New York State to be named.

The importance of older workers in the labor force will be critical as the percentage of Americans age 50 and older continues to increase. "AARP's recognition reinforces Cornell's commitment to addressing work, life and family challenges for its diverse employee population," said Lynette Chappell-Williams, director of the Cornell Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality.

In its November/December issue of *Hot Jobs 2005*, AARP noted Cornell for the number of employees and managers over 50 and for the "wow factors" that earned Cornell the award. The wow factors include opportunities to enroll in credit-bearing courses; casual study, such as non-credit courses; and a comprehensive wellness program for retirees that includes gym membership and classes for only \$168 a year.

In addition to receiving national recognition, Cornell also keeps diversity and compliance in the forefront through internal publications. Through the efforts of the University Diversity Council, monthly columns related to diversity have appeared in the *Cornell Chronicle*, the university's official publication. The articles have included information on such topics as affirmative action, creating an inclusive classroom, religious diversity, and addressing bias activity.

In addition, two issues of a diversity newsletter are published each year and distributed to deans, directors, department heads, vice presidents, and student leaders to highlight diversity "best practices" at Cornell. Publications from the Office of Human Resources, also regularly feature diversity issues. The employee bi-weekly newsletter, *PawPrint*, also regularly highlights diversity-related activities and issues.

More Than Just Compliance: Addressing Equal Opportunity Issues from a Holistic Perspective

Federal, state and local regulations dictate having effective procedures to address discrimination in the

workplace. Cornell has established procedures to address situations when one individual alleges that another individual has engaged in behavior that is alleged to be discriminatory. In addition to various procedures to address protected status discrimination, Cornell has a policy and procedure to address sexual harassment. This procedure includes an informal resolution option and mediation. If a matter is not resolved at an informal step, if requested or if deemed appropriate, the university will initiate an investigation. The university's commitment to a harassment-free environment and the university's mechanism for addressing harassment is communicated to the Cornell community through harassment advisors, individuals designated by the university to be initial points of contact for individuals who want to discuss concerns of harassment. In addition to the complaint procedures, in November of 2000, Cornell implemented its Bias Response Program, a system for addressing situations that impact the university's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in which the alleged respondent is unknown and cannot be identified.

Bias Response Program

The Bias Response Program is a university-wide system designed to supplement the university's existing discrimination procedures and processes and to respond to bias activity by advising the university community of the occurrence of such activity, providing support-related resources to individuals who have experienced bias activity, and developing programs to assist with eliminating future bias activity. The most unique aspect of the Bias Response Program is a term developed by Cornell: bias incident. A bias incident is an act of bigotry, harassment, or intimidation that one could reasonably conclude is directed at a member or group of the Cornell community based on that individual's or group's actual or perceived age, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/presentation, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any combination of these or related factors, and when the identity of the alleged perpetrator (individual alleged to have engaged in the activity) is not known or is not reasonably identifiable, and when the action has occurred on Cornell's campus or within an area that impacts the Cornell community.

Although many organizations track bias crimes, Cornell also tracks these bias incidents. Therefore, even in those instances in which there is no respondent or perpetrator identified, Cornell responds to these actions and develops programs to reduce the likelihood of the activity occurring again.

The Bias Response Program consists of a 12-person team of senior administrators who coordinate responsive action for bias activity and develop strategies for preventing future bias. A team of approximately 30 individuals throughout the university have been designated as "reporting team members" who are the first point of contact for reporting bias activity. The bias protocol therefore provides a "support system" for the individual who has experienced the bias, and an opportunity to develop proactive approaches to address challenges to diversity.

Since the program's inception, over 250 reports of bias incidents and crimes have been reported through the university's Bias Response Program. The bias activity has included graffiti, vandalism, verbal slurs, comments, inappropriate e-mail, and instant message correspondence, and has resulted in responses such as university-wide correspondence to reaffirm the commitment to diversity, training sessions to discuss bias issues and outline the university's behavioral expectations, and educational sessions for individuals identified as participants in the bias activity.

Addressing the Americans with Disabilities Act

In addition to its mechanisms for addressing complaint-related issues, Cornell has developed a system for responding to disability accommodations.

In February of 2000, Cornell University began piloting a disability accommodation program to assist employees with disabilities in obtaining the assistance needed to perform their jobs and to raise the awareness of the needs of these employees in the workplace. In May of 2002, this program became one of the university's formal policies and continues to be an effective tool in addressing compliance and creating an environment that is supportive of employees with disabilities. The accommodation program is designed so that the employee, the university's disability office, and the employee's department can work together to develop creative solutions in addressing the employee's needs. Since the program's development, the university has responded to more than 69 requests for disability accommodations. These have included requests for flexible working hours, a smoke and fragrance-free environment, visual assistance tools, sound barriers, headphones, additional rest breaks, ergonomic work stations, air purification systems and cooling systems.

Supporting the EEOC Guidelines on Religion

Cornell has also implemented a formal system for addressing religious diversity. Since 1989, the university's Dean of Faculty has worked with the Cornell United Religious Work (CURW) to distribute a letter advising faculty of significant religious holidays, so that those dates could be avoided in scheduling student examinations and related academic requirements. Since 2002, the university has distributed an annual letter to administrative offices that encourages respect for religious differences during the winter holidays. In May, 2005, the university implemented a religious accommodation policy and procedures that provide an opportunity for academic and nonacademic staff and student employees to address issues related to religious diversity. In addition to processes to ensure compliance with the law, the university has taken steps to raise awareness of religious diversity.

The Holiday Unity Celebration was conceived in 1997 as a way to bring employees together to celebrate the diversity of the Cornell community at the holidays. Typically four-to-seven members of the Cornell community from varying ethnic and spiritual traditions share stories with an audience from across the university. These stories may be reminiscences from their childhood or explanations of how they have incorporated older traditions into their present day lives.

Compliance with the State and County's Discrimination Policies Regarding Sexual Orientation

The State of New York and Tompkins County, where the university is located, have legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. In addition, Tompkins County approved in February 2004 the inclusion of "gender identity and expression" as a protected group in the local anti-discrimination act. Cornell University's equal employment and education policy includes sexual orientation as a basis of discrimination and has done so since 1991. As of April 2005, the board of trustees approved the inclusion of "gender identity and expression" into the statement.

"Religion is the greatest force in the world today. Anabel Taylor Hall, as an interfaith center, is built on the simple conception that we are all believers in God and human liberty, and that people of all faiths must stand together for good against evil."

— Myron C. Taylor, written on the hallway wall outside the lobby of Anabel Taylor Hall

To further support the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/questioning (LGBTQ) community, the Cornell University Gay-Straight Alliance (CUGSA), supported by the university's Office of the Dean of Students, and in cooperation with the LGBT Resource Center, has initiated the Safe Place Project. This program, which has been endorsed by the University Diversity Council, helps members of the LGBTQ community feel more accepted and appreciated at Cornell. The Safe Place Project consists of individuals, departments, and units displaying a card, or wearing a pin, that shows support of the LGBTQ community. Displaying the Safe Place Card affirms support for an inclusive campus that values all of our students, faculty and staff.



Compliance with Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act

Cornell is committed to increasing the employment opportunities and visibility of veterans on campus. To assist veterans with indicating who they are, the self-identification form was recently put online. The university also includes workshops for veterans as part of its Life Cycles educational workshop series.

To bring awareness of veterans within the workplace, the university hosted the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall Memorial in collaboration with the Cornell University ROTC Program in May 2001. The Moving Wall is a replica of the Vietnam Veterans National Memorial, "The Wall," which is located in Washington, D.C. The Moving Wall is taken to various cities and towns throughout the country, providing Americans with an opportunity to pay homage to the more than 58,000 American soldiers who gave their lives for their country. During the three-day display of the Moving Wall at Cornell, more than a thousand students, faculty, staff, and members of the local community visited the wall to pay tribute. Over 100 faculty, staff and students volunteered for numerous tasks related to hosting this monumental event, including set-up, hosting, 24-hour guarding, and dismantling. In connection with this event, a number of educational and awareness-raising sessions were held on campus related to veteran issues.



Flowers are reflected on the Moving Wall, a half-sized replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Moving Wall was displayed on the Ag Quad May 1-5, 2001, and attracted over a thousand visitors.

More than Just Availability: Addressing Affirmative Action from a Holistic Perspective

In addition to its unique system for addressing discrimination, Cornell has taken a novel approach in addressing its affirmative action regulations. Executive Order 11246, as amended, 41CFR Chapter 60-250, and 41CFR Chapter 60-741 require a written affirmative action plan from federal contractors who meet the regulatory threshold. Since 2001, information on the university's affirmative action responsibilities and its progress in achieving affirmative action goals has been disseminated annually to the president, provost, deans, vice presidents, and vice provosts through individual meetings. During these meetings, senior management is advised of the availability for each job group, the university's progress in meeting affirmative action goals for each job group, and their own unit's progress in meeting goals. Cornell has developed an Affirmative Action and Workforce Inclusion Plan that is designed to be a "live" document for moving the university's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness forward. In addition to having the required components of an

affirmative action plan, Cornell's plan also includes "best practices" for addressing diversity as well as its commitment to addressing work/life and work/family "balance" challenges for its diverse employees.

The university continues to take aggressive steps to increase the representation of women and minorities within its workforce. In addition to including national availability for all of its job groups, the university has established outreach efforts to recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds. For the plan year ending June 30, 2005, the university's overall workforce consisted of 11.6% minorities and 50.3% women. The representation of women in Cornell's non-academic workforce met or exceeded the available pool of women with the requisite skills in the labor force in 67.4% (58 of the 86 new) job groups, and the representation of minorities in Cornell's workforce met or exceeded the available pool of minorities with the requisite skills in the labor force in 15.1% (13 of the 86 new) job groups. Of the 86 job groups, only 14, or 16%, were not diverse based on race and sex.

Of particular note, for the most senior level job groups in the university, availability was exceeded for women in eight of the ten job groups and, for minorities, in two of the ten job groups. In addition, in the job groups categorized as skilled trades, availability for women is exceeded in five of the six job groups, and availability for minority employees is exceeded in three of the six job groups. For 2005, women represented 9.04% of the positions in the skilled trades, and minorities represented 4.52% of the positions. This compares with 5.29% women representation and 3.4% minority representation in 2000, when the skilled trades initiative began.

The university's overall progress in addressing affirmative action goals for non-academic staff is an improvement over the prior plan year, that ended June 30, 2004. For plan year 2004, of the 56 job groups used in prior years, the representation of women met or exceeded the available pool of women in the labor workforce in 57% (vs. 67.4% for plan year 2005) of the job groups, and the representation of minorities met or exceeded the available pool in 14% (vs. 15.1% for plan year 2005) of the job groups.

Cornell recognizes that its affirmative action efforts involve more than just recruitment—they also involve a commitment to retaining a diverse workforce. As a result, the university created the Life Cycles workshops to assist employees with acclimating to the Cornell and Ithaca community. The Life Cycles workshop series, described later in this document, is one of the tools Cornell has developed to address retention.

In addition, each academic and administrative unit is requested to complete its own version of the university's Affirmative Action and Workforce Inclusion Plan to ensure accountability throughout the organization. The university has a recruiter on staff in its Recruitment and Employment Center to assist the various units with diversity recruitment.

Creating a Culture for Inclusiveness: Training for the Cornell Community

The Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble (CITE) has had a significant impact in creating a culture of inclusiveness at Cornell. CITE was formed in January of 1992 as a unique resource for human relations training, serving a wide variety of client groups, including employees and students, professional conferences, and corporations. CITE training workshops explore how to work together effectively and appropriately in a workplace characterized by differences. Cornell's diversity training effort began in 2001 with a series of CITE training programs for supervisors, including a diversity awareness session

in which 1,200 supervisors participated between 2001 and 2003. The program consisted of an overview of the university's "Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds" vision for diversity and inclusiveness, a compliance training session held in conjunction with the university's legal department to address discrimination and sexual harassment issues in the workplace, a disability awareness program (based on the Roosevelt Thomas fable in *Building a House for Diversity*), and a work/life presentation to assist in developing creative solutions that address the diverse challenges of balancing work responsibilities with responsibilities and interests outside of work.

In addition to these sessions, CITE worked with a number of colleges to address diversity in the classroom and in interactions between faculty, staff and students.

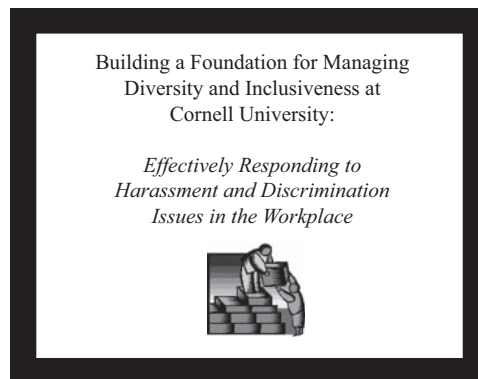
In 2001, the university began the New Student Reading Project as part of the University Orientation Program to give all first-year students a point of intellectual common ground. Regardless of school, college or major, all first-year students study a single text related to an aspect of diversity.

In August of 2002, the university expanded this initiative by launching the "One Vision, Many Voices" program to address the challenge that students face when being exposed to diversity for the first time. Adjusting to an environment with so many different cultures, ideas, and beliefs can sometimes be a difficult transition for first-year and transfer students. The purpose of the program is to allow these students to recognize the complexities that living in a diverse community engenders, to dialogue about possible strategies for conflict resolution, and to heighten their awareness of similarities, rather than of differences. Through the expertise of the Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble, the "One Vision, Many Voices" program provides an opportunity for participants to share a variety of points of view, facilitating a shift in student culture towards greater honesty, trust, respect, and human dignity.

Cornell has also implemented several other training programs to ensure that there is a commitment to its compliance obligations and to diversity. The Discovering Leadership Program, initiated in 1998, has proven to have a lasting positive effect on diversity and inclusiveness throughout the university. One of the key goals of the program is to increase staff and faculty members' self-awareness of their unique differences, and to value differences in gender, race, sexual orientation, beliefs, etc., as a basis for learning and creativity. Through this program, participants learn to include and communicate effectively with people of diverse backgrounds. The program helps to create new experiences around diversity and inclusiveness, build trust, and develop an organizational culture in which diversity and inclusiveness are not only valued but also practiced. The program has been offered to 324 senior executives, middle managers, and faculty members who are responsible for setting direction in their organization.

The New Supervisory Orientation Certificate Program, taking place over six-and-a-half days, is designed to provide new supervisors with an overview of the basics of supervision, including an introduction to EEO, affirmative action, and diversity.

The Supervisor Development Certificate Program is a four-day program that provides a consistent set of expectations for all supervisors across Cornell University to ensure the equal opportunity and treatment of women, minorities, and marginalized groups. The program helps to ensure that supervisors understand human resources law (specifically, workplace harassment, sexual harassment,



Americans with Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, and Age Discrimination in Employment Act), and how to proceed in cases where laws may have been violated.

The Office Professionals Program is a 70-hour program for staff in administrative support functions that is designed to develop and enhance professional skills and knowledge, with a focus on women, minorities, and marginalized staff. The program includes formal training, teamwork, opportunities to network, and two hours of training on diversity issues.

In addition, the university offers employees the opportunity to learn more about compliance and diversity issues through SkillSoft on-line educational programming, of more than 800 workshops. These workshops include: Hostile Work Environment Harassment, Management Skills for the Diverse Work Force, Quid Pro Quo Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Workplace Diversity, Culture and Behavior, Organizational Inclusion, Corporate Culture and Diversity, Management Skills for the Diverse Work Force, Communication and Diversity Adoption, Managing Diversity and Inclusiveness Simulation, and Management Skills for the Diverse Work Force.



CITE actors rehearse for “One Vision, Many Voices.”

Through the efforts of one of the university’s student-elected trustees, the university has also established a collaborative class on race that is intended for first- and second-year students, focusing on race in America and at Cornell, and discussing topics such as the concept of race, the social dynamics of race, the politics of race, and race and culture. The class also explores the relevance of the academic inquiry for student experiences at Cornell.

“Institutionalizing” the Commitment to Diversity

In addition to the specific programs identified above, Cornell has taken steps to make sure that all new members of its organization are aware of the university’s commitment to diversity. Prospective students are required to complete an essay for admission to the university and are given options of topics, one of which relates to diversity. The university’s orientation program for newly hired employees, revised in 2000, includes an introduction to the university’s commitment to diversity, including the history of how the Open Doors vision statement was developed. The *Welcome to Cornell* video that was created for this orientation program stresses Cornell’s diversity, inclusiveness, and progressive policies.

Cornell has also developed a set of skills, the Staff Skills for Success, that it believes will be critical for staff to develop for the work of the years ahead. These skills have been integrated in the training programs noted previously, as well as throughout Cornell’s hiring, performance management, training, and reward systems. Supervisors are encouraged to evaluate staff on the Skills for Success. The first component or skill listed includes diversity and inclusiveness. This component requires staff employees to show respect for differences in backgrounds, lifestyles, viewpoints, and needs in reference to areas such as ethnicity, race, gender, creed, and sexual orientation; promote cooperation and a welcoming environment for all; work to understand the perspectives brought by all individuals; and pursue knowledge of diversity and inclusiveness.⁶

The university also established the Cornell Alumni-Student Mentoring Program to attract and graduate larger numbers of students who contribute to the diversity of the university. The program, funded by the

university's provost office, provides an alumnus mentor to every enrolling underrepresented minority student who is interested in participating in the program.

Creating an Inclusive Culture Outside of the Work Environment

Cornell's unique location in a rural area makes diversity recruiting and retention a challenge. The 2000 Census indicates that Tompkins County, where Cornell is located, has a population of 16.2% people of color (Black/African American, American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Hispanic). Cornell has taken aggressive steps to create an environment that is of interest to the diverse populations within the local population of 96,500.

Sandbox Socials

For instance, the university established the Sandbox Socials program—a monthly series of activities for individuals of color. Through the Sandbox Socials program, employees learn salsa dancing, take soul food cooking lessons, go bowling, eat ethnic-based dinners, and attend theatre productions. In 2004-2005, these events were attended by 107 individuals and have led to lasting professional as well as social relationships.



Multicultural Reading Circle Program

The university also developed the Multicultural Reading Circle program – an opportunity for employees and local community members to read and discuss a book written by an author of a diverse background or written about some aspect of diversity. The reading circle was previously held as a monthly program. For the 2005 – 2006 plan year, the Reading Circle will begin to host two larger events per year with guest authors, in partnership with local bookstores and other local and university-sponsored events. Book choices include topics involving race, sexual orientation, disability issues, gender and gender identity.

First Fridays

In order to enhance networking among people new to the Ithaca area, Cornell collaborated with Ithaca College and the City of Ithaca to offer "First Fridays." Once each month, a "First Friday" event is held at a local restaurant, allowing individuals an informal way to become connected to the community.

Work/Life/Family

Recognizing that staff and faculty have responsibilities outside of work, including responsibility for children, Cornell also has a number of programs to address work/life/family issues. These include: the flex policy, which allows employees to modify their work hours or to work at locations other than their office; the Child Care Grant Subsidy Program, which is financial support provided to employees to help them meet child care expenses; and a children's learning enrichment summer camp program that incorporates diversity.

Emergency Assistance

To assist Cornell community members with unexpected emergencies or grave situations, Cornell University has implemented an Emergency Grant Fund, which assists employees with financial emergency situations, and a Catastrophic Leave Donation policy. In place since 2001, the Catastrophic Leave Donation policy allows staff members to voluntarily donate sick and vacation leave to their colleagues who experience, or whose family member experiences, a terminal, life-threatening, or other grave illness or injury. Donated leave provides an opportunity for staff members who need time away from work, and who have exhausted their own leave accruals, to remain on the payroll if they are faced with such catastrophic circumstances.

Parental Leaves

In August 2004, Cornell University revised its policy on leaves for professors and academic staff. For tenure track faculty who are parents of a newborn, or during an adopted or foster child's first year in the household, when duties as primary care-giving parent call faculty away from their work, the university will offer an automatic extension of the tenure clock for up to one semester which can be declined if preferred. Similarly, in situations beyond those of a primary care-giving parent where parenting duties interfere substantially with progress in the academic program, tenure-clock extensions may be requested through the department chair for approval by the dean and the provost. Those participating in the tenure review process are directed not to allow the professor's use of Cornell academic parental leave or family-related tenure-clock extensions to be a negative element or to have a negative influence in the evaluation of any candidate for tenure.

A new family leave for staff policy became effective September 1, 2005. This policy is intended to grant benefits-eligible staff members time off to care for their newborn, newly adopted or foster-care children and for seriously ill family members. It complements a number of different kinds of leave that Cornell offers, as well as a long-standing flexibility policy and the Adoption Assistance Program that became effective January, 2005, to help balance the demands of the workplace, personal responsibilities and the needs of staff families.

Life Cycles Workshops

The university's Life Cycles workshop series assists employees with addressing diverse work/life and work/family issues such as: coming out in the workplace; resources for individuals with disabilities; LGBT family-building; resources and programs for veterans; interfaith/interracial couples parenting children; parenting multi-ethnic/multi-cultural children; parenting children with special needs; single parenting; and supporting friends and family coming out.

Supporting Diversity Efforts in the Local Community

Cornell University actively participates in the Tompkins County Diversity Consortium, a group of employers who have been meeting monthly since November of 1999 to address diversity issues in the community. The consortium's mission is to be a catalyst for enhancing awareness, providing networking and support opportunities, and promoting the best practices of diversity and its benefits as essential to an organization's success. The consortium's primary objectives are to cultivate a continuous learn-

ing environment, promote a positive community image, and serve as a liaison for diversity resources. Monthly meetings provide members the opportunity to nurture inter-organizational relationships and professional dialogue. The Diversity Consortium strives through tangible actions to make its members' workplaces more inclusive and to make the community more welcoming to diverse populations. During the meetings, member organizations share job openings and feedback from employees and constituent groups on issues that impact diversity.

In addition to the Diversity Consortium, Cornell University is actively involved with the Central/Western New York State Industry Liaison Group. In November of 1999, Cornell was instrumental in developing the Central/Western New York State ILG that consists of employers in 28 counties throughout upstate New York. Because of the geographical distance between the members and the weather conditions, meetings are held three times a year. Through the efforts of Cornell University, the ILG has maintained an active membership since 1999 and has developed a web site <<http://www.ohr.cornell.edu/ILG/Default.html>> to assist member employees with keeping informed of new developments in the equal employment opportunity and affirmative action area.

In 2000, Cornell recognized the shortage of women and minorities in the skilled trades. As a result, the university convened a group of high-level employees from throughout the university to brainstorm ideas to increase the representation of women and minorities not only within the skilled trades positions employed within the university but also throughout the local community. These initial meetings resulted in the university's Office of Human Resources hosting an annual meeting that includes representatives from Cornell University, the local unions, and local contractors, as well as city, county and state officials. Each year since 2000, the Skilled Trades Diversity Consortium has made progress in increasing the representation of women and minorities in the skilled trades. With the establishment of a Diversity Recruiter position within the university's Planning, Design and Construction department in 2001, there has been an increase in the university's skilled trades minority and women representation. For the 2003 - 2004 plan year, the availability for women within the skilled trades job group at Cornell was 9.14% and the utilization was 7.1% (11 of 155 employees). For the 2002 - 2003 plan year, the availability for women was 7.8% and the utilization was 7.89%, reflecting an increase over the 5.5% representation (8 of 145 employees) from the 2001 - 2002 plan year. That same year, the availability for minorities was 9.97% and the utilization was 4.52% (7 of 155 employees). As was the case with women, this represents an increase from the 2001 - 2002 plan year, which was 3.4% minority (5 of 145 employees). During the 2002 - 2003 plan year, the availability was 8.53% and utilization was 3.95%.

Consortium meetings have included feature speakers. At the January 2002 session, Ralph Thaman Jr., vice chancellor for facilities management and planning at Washington University in St. Louis, spoke about his university's diversity efforts and best practices. During the January 2003 meeting, Frank Daniel, executive director of the Buffalo Building Trades Development Partnership, addressed the consortium. In January of 2004, the meeting featured speakers Ron Krukowski and Steve McGlone from Turner Construction. Their presentation focused on diversity program development, outreach and compliance. Both speakers also touched on the importance of developing strong relationships with women- and minority-owned businesses. The presentation was followed by small-group discussions to develop long-term strategic objectives for increasing diversity



Lynette Chappell-Williams, director of the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality, discusses issues with participants at the 2004 Annual Skilled Trades Diversity Consortium meeting.

in the skilled trades by identifying effective utilization of pipeline programs and strategies to market the skilled trades as a career to youth, with a particular focus on women and minorities. As a result of this meeting, a subgroup has formed to further explore pre-apprentice training programs.



Members of the Central and Western New York State ILG at Eastman Kodak, June 2003 meeting.

Conclusion

Cornell University's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness stems from its foundation in 1865. Historically, Cornell has much to be proud of because of its groundbreaking beginnings. It was the founding institution for Alpha Phi Alpha, the first African American undergraduate fraternity, and it was the first university to have an interfaith department for religious affairs.

Cornell continues this legacy by recognizing diversity and promoting inclusiveness as a core value, as reflected in its "Open Doors, Open Hearts, and Open Minds" statement, and by developing programs, policies and procedures that make that value become a reality.

Cornell has made significant progress in recruiting under-represented minorities, developing new programs such as the "One Vision, Many Voices" program that promotes an inclusive climate for students, creating policies that support families and their needs, and establishing procedures for religious accommodations. Cornell also has made strides in institutionalizing efforts that ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws, including addressing affirmative action, incorporating "gender identity and expression" into the Equal Employment and Education Opportunity statement, providing disability accommodations, and bringing awareness to the community of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act.

Cornell recognizes that diversity is an asset in our community and that it constantly evolves and changes. The holistic approach to diversity and inclusiveness recognizes and values the differences that individuals bring to the university. By taking the holistic approach, Cornell looks to support the full community and to create an inclusive environment for all.

End Notes

¹Data for students and employees is as of 2005. Data for Cornell's board and administration is as of 2004.

²November/December 2003 publication.

³Data as of 2005

⁴Morris Bishop, *History of Cornell* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962).

⁵These include the Faculty Senate, the Employee Assembly for nonacademic staff employees, the Student Assembly for undergraduate students, and the Graduate/Professional Student Assembly.

⁶In addition to inclusiveness, employees are evaluated on the following dimensions: adaptability, self-development, communication, teamwork, service-minded, stewardship, and motivation.

OPEN DOORS, OPEN HEARTS, AND OPEN MINDS

Cornell's Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness

Open Doors

"I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." This statement, made by Ezra Cornell in 1865, proclaims Cornell University's enduring commitment to inclusion and opportunity which is rooted in the shared democratic values envisioned by its founders. We honor this legacy of diversity and inclusion and welcome all individuals, including those from groups that have been historically marginalized and previously excluded from equal access to opportunity.

Open Hearts

Cornell's mission is to foster personal discovery and growth, nurture scholarship and creativity across a broad range of common knowledge and affirm the value to individuals and society of the cultivation of the human mind and spirit. Our legacy is reflected in the diverse composition of our community, the breadth of our curriculum, the strength of our public service, and the depth of our commitment to freedom, equity, and reason. Each member of the Cornell community has a responsibility to honor this legacy and to support a more diverse and inclusive campus in which to work, study, teach, research, and serve.

Open Minds

Free expression is essential to this mission, and provocative ideas lawfully presented are an expected result. An enlightened academic community, however, connects freedom with responsibility. Cornell stands for civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion and constructive engagement without degrading, abusing, harassing, or silencing others. Cornell is committed to act responsibly and forthrightly to maintain an environment that opens doors, opens hearts and opens minds.

Adopted by the Employee Assembly and the University Assembly, December 1, 1999; the Student Assembly, December 3, 1999; the Faculty Senate, December 8, 1999, and the Graduate & Professional Student Assembly, January 24, 2000.

For more information about diversity programs at Cornell University:

Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality:

<http://www.ohr.cornell.edu/contactHR/workLifeDiversity/index.html>

The University Diversity Council Web Site: <http://www.sws.cornell.edu/diversitycouncil>

Provost Biddy Martin Web Site: <http://www.cornell.edu/provost/about.cfm>

To report issues of bias or discrimination: <http://www.ohr.cornell.edu/hr/hrManage/diversity/index.html>

Cornell University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer.