

Cornell University

September 2005

Family Leaves Policy for Nonacademics  
Educational Opportunities  
AARP's "Best Employer" Award

# For Your Benefit

Official Information and News about Cornell's Benefits,  
Policies and Work-Related Developments

## At Every Stage of Life's Journey . . .

~Mary George Opperman

As we start a new academic year, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we all need to remember to take time for those things that truly matter—our friends and family; the natural world around us; the ability to meet our needs, to grow and learn, to pursue our dreams.

Over the past several years, Cornell University has developed or enhanced a number of programs and policies that make it easier for faculty and staff to attend to these truly significant matters.

A year ago this summer, Cornell University enriched the Leaves for Professors and Academic Staff Policy; last January, 2005, we implemented a new Adoption Assistance Program for both faculty and staff; over the past few months we negotiated with SkillSoft to offer over 2,000 on-line courses; President Rawlings has recently issued a statement giving emergency responders paid time away from work.

Cornell University also recently announced a new Family Leaves for Staff benefit as part of the non-academic staff Time Away from Work policy.

This special issue of *For Your Benefit* not only explains this family leaves benefit in detail, but also examines some of the many ways in which the university has recently expanded the opportunities that staff and faculty have to seek new learning and new growth. The broad array of support that Cornell provides at all stages of life recently led to recognition from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). This recognition is an important reminder that, regardless of where we are in life's journey, our hopes, our loved ones—and the many ways in which we become engaged in and find meaning throughout our lives—are what truly matter in the end.

### Hurricane Katrina Release Time

Many at Cornell have expressed a desire to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. President Rawlings recently determined that Cornell staff and faculty who are trained and registered as emergency responders and are interested in volunteering for organizations involved in hurricane relief efforts may be granted up to three consecutive weeks (15 consecutive working days) of paid administrative leave for such activities. Guidelines for release time include the following:

- All paid release time will require the advance approval of the Dean/VP (or his/her designee) after consideration of operational needs.
- Release time may be granted for faculty and regular full-time and part-time staff.
- Release time may only be granted for official volunteer operations requiring travel to the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.
- This policy will be in effect for one year (through September 2006) and will be reviewed again at that time.
- Individuals requesting release time should provide management with appropriate documentation supporting the request.
- Paid leave will be for regular hours worked, and will not count against paid time off balances. Requests for additional time off will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with normal university policies.

## Cornell University Named a 'Best Employer' For Workers Aged 50 and Older

~Joe Schwartz, Cornell News Service

Cornell University has been named one of the best employers for workers over the age of 50, according to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Each year, the association honors 50 employers in the United States for their practices and policies for mature workers with its "AARP Best Employers for Workers Over 50" list. Cornell is ranked number 5 among the 50 honorees listed this year, and it is the only college or university to be named from New York state.

"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. "The issues AARP considered – recruitment strategies, flexible work options, workplace accommodations, training and development opportunities, and a wealth of health, medical and retirement benefits – are some of the programs that the university has had in place for several years. Cornell continues to implement innovative programs to address the needs of its workers over 50 as well as all of its employees."

The award was presented September 22 at a special AARP Awards Dinner at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. Mary George Opperman, Cornell vice president for human resources, and Lynette Chappell-Williams accepted the award for the university. For more information about the AARP "Best Employer" program, visit: <http://www.aarp.org/money/careers/employerresourcecenter/bestemployers/>.



Lynette Chappell-Williams, director of the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality

Robert Barker, Cornell University Photography

## New Family Leaves for Staff Benefit for Nonacademic Staff Provides Counterpart to Academic Parental Leaves Policy

A new Family Leaves for Staff policy became effective on September 1, 2005. This new policy is intended to grant benefits-eligible nonacademic staff members time off to care for their newborn, newly adopted, or foster care children and for seriously ill family members, and can be found at [http://policy.cornell.edu/CM\\_Images/Uploads/POL/vol6\\_9\\_family.pdf](http://policy.cornell.edu/CM_Images/Uploads/POL/vol6_9_family.pdf). It complements the Leaves for Professors and Academic Staff Policy that the university enhanced last summer, 2004, which can be found at [http://www.policy.cornell.edu/Vol6\\_2\\_1.cfm](http://www.policy.cornell.edu/Vol6_2_1.cfm).

### Background

The university has long had policies and programs that support faculty and staff in balancing the many, sometimes competing, responsibilities of their personal and working lives, while also meeting the needs of the departments and units in which they are employed. It has enhanced its benefits and programs to meet a wide range of work/life needs, offering programs such as long term care insurance, same-sex partner benefits, a flexibility policy, and social events for newly hired minority. Recognizing that the needs of today's family are continually evolving, the university has also implemented a number of programs and policies that specifically address the needs of families with children. In addition to the longstanding Cornell Children's Tuition Scholarship program, the University Summer Day Camp, the University

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### Policy Effective Dates for Transition Planning

The Family Leaves for Staff became effective September 1, 2005. In transitioning to this benefit, and in order to provide Cornell non-academic staff and their supervisors with a period of adjustment, the following other conditions of eligibility and provisions are to be followed. If you have any questions about your individual situation, please talk with your HR representative or call Workers' Compensation and Disability Services, 255-7836.

- The birth of a child or the commencement of the adoption process will be accepted as eligible for treatment under the new policies if they occur on or after March 1, 2005, or six months prior to the effective date of the policy itself.
- The four-week, half-pay provision of Parental Leave cannot be taken prior to September 1, 2005.
- The provision to allow for the use of ten extra days of available sick leave accruals during approved Family Leaves for Staff cannot be taken prior to September 1, 2005.
- The continuing provision of 12 weeks of FMLA unpaid leave was newly refreshed for the last time, for FMLA eligibility purposes, on July 1, 2005 for all eligible employees. Beginning July 1, 2006, the amount of FMLA unpaid leave available to any participant will be subject to use of such leave during the 12 months immediately prior to the leave request. (see Q&A)
- Effective September 1, 2005, FMLA leave will count concurrently with any Family Leaves for Staff or Medical Leaves for Staff time approved and taken.

## Parental Leave (continued from page 1)

Cooperative Nursery School, and Select Benefits Dependent Care Reimbursement Program, Cornell has more recently implemented a Child Care Grant Subsidy Program (now in its fifth year, see page 8 for 2005-06 information) and, as of last January, an Adoption Assistance Program.

The Parental Leaves benefit portion of the Family Leaves for Staff is the latest of these to be implemented to meet a wide range of family structures and needs. (See sidebar at left for transition dates and eligibility.) The following text from the *Cornell Chronicle*, September 1, 2005 issue explains the features of the Parental Leaves for Staff and Family Health Leaves benefits, and we reprint it here. For more details, see the full policy at [http://policy.cornell.edu/CM\\_Images/Uploads/POL/vol6\\_9\\_family.pdf](http://policy.cornell.edu/CM_Images/Uploads/POL/vol6_9_family.pdf), and the accompanying articles in this issue of *For Your Benefit* that address some transition issues and questions that we have been asked about this policy. Staff with questions should call their human resources representative or the Workers' Compensation/Disability Services unit of OHR, 255-7836.

### **Family Leaves for Staff, Explained**

There are two parts to the Family Leaves for Staff policy, the Parental Leaves benefit and the Family Health Leaves benefit. In support of adoptive and foster parents as well as birth parents, the new Parental Leave benefit will provide up to 16 weeks of time off for family bonding. The Parental Leave benefit is designed to become effective after the birth of a child and during or after the adoption process, giving new mothers and fathers time to be at home with their child to help with the transition to a larger family.

Since the 1970s, short term disability leave has been used for time taken away from work during an expectant mother's pregnancy, and it will continue to apply for that purpose. The new Parental Leave benefit can immediately follow the short term disability leave to extend the time a mother has with her newborn(s) or during the first 12 months following a child's birth. Up to four of the 12 weeks of Parental Leave will be provided at half pay for the birth mother. In addition, the father or same-sex partner of a birth mother—if he or she is a benefits-eligible employee of the university—will also be able to take Parental Leave from his or her position and receive the same half-pay benefit for up to four weeks.

Employees who adopt a child do not generally qualify for a short term disability leave of absence, yet they still need time to be with their new family member. Under the Parental Leave benefit, adoptive parents may qualify for up to six weeks of half pay. However, if both adoptive parents are eligible Cornell employees, they will need to identify which parent is the primary caregiver. The primary caregiver will be able to use up to six weeks of half-paid Parental Leave. The other parent in the family, if she or he is also a benefits-eligible Cornell employee, will qualify for up to four weeks of half pay under the plan.

Foster parents are eligible for the full 16 weeks of Parental Leave, but they cannot access the four weeks of half-pay feature.

The Parental Leave time taken by foster parents and the balances of the Parental Leave duration for birth and adoptive parents beyond the four or six weeks of half pay can be supplemented by other paid time away from work, if they have accrued leave to use.

To help with the financial aspects of the unpaid portion of the leave, staff members will be able to supplement their paid Parental Leave benefit with vacation time, up to full pay. Parental Leave participants will also be able to use up to ten sick leave days from their accruals to supplement the Parental Leave half-pay benefit.

The second aspect of the Family Leaves for Staff policy, Family Health Leave, provides up to 12 weeks in a year of unpaid leave for the care of a seriously ill family member. Staff may apply available accrued vacation, personal leave (up to three days) and/or health care leave (up to three days) to supplement their time off with partial or full pay. In addition, approved Family Health Leave allows a staff member to apply up to ten days of accrued sick leave, if available. "We wanted to make sure that our staff not only have the time they need to care for another family member, which was the purpose of the federal FML act, but also are better able to afford taking that time off," said Mary Opperman, vice president for human resources. "Our new Family Leave benefit is designed to help those staff who are having difficulty balancing their work and financial responsibilities with the intensive caregiving stresses that come when serious health conditions arise."

## Questions and Answers on the Family Leaves for Staff Benefit

We recently asked Paul Bursic, director of Benefit Services in the Office of Human Resources, to respond to questions that have been asked in regard to the Family Leaves policy. His responses are below.

**Q: Suppose I am pregnant and my doctor tells me to stop working three weeks before my due date. How would short term disability and the Parental Leave policy apply to me?**

A: The commencement and ending of your short term disability benefit period are determined by your doctor. Some individuals need more time than others, but the short term disability benefit adjusts to the needs of each participant. Once you finish your short term disability time, you then may take Parental Leave. The policy has been designed to extend your time with your baby with half pay for four weeks and even more time without pay (up to 16 weeks altogether). You cannot take Parental Leave at the same time as you are on short term disability leave.

**Q: What if I am going through the adoption process? When does the adoption process commence under the policy?**

A: The adoption process can vary considerably for each family. The Parental Leave policy remains flexible as to the commencement date of the adoption to allow parents to take the time offered by the policy at the time that is most beneficial to the family. You just need to be able to show that you are actively engaged in the process with professional or agency assistance.

**Q: If I am adopting a child, may I wait until the child is safely in my custody and will permanently reside in our home before taking my Parental Leave?**

A: Yes, but be sure to use the full leave time you are able to take within 12 months of your child's permanent placement in your home.



Paul Bursic, director of Benefit Services

Robert Barker, Cornell University Photography

(continued from page 2)

**Q: Why is more time given as half pay to those who are adopting vs. those who are giving birth?**

A: Employees and their families that go through the adoption process must take off considerable amounts of time to meet with government and agency officials, as well as trying to spend as much time as possible with the child or children. Often these contacts involve distant travel to remote locations. All this time has traditionally been supplemented by vacation time or just time off without pay. By the time the child is permanently placed with the family and arrives in the home, employees usually have very low leave accruals, if they have any available at all. Thus, a slightly longer benefit with pay appeared to be appropriate. Only the self-designated primary parent in a family may take the full six weeks. If the second parent is also a Cornell employee, he/she is limited to four weeks of half pay.

**Q: I don't understand the 16 weeks per year, rolling look-back feature. Can you explain?**

A: Several leaves are available to employees who qualify, but there is a limit in how many weeks or workdays one can be away from the job in a 12-month period. Overall, the university will allow 26 weeks of leave time to be taken in a 12-month period with the security of knowing that the department may not permanently replace the person taking the leave. So, if you are eligible for and plan to take the full 16 weeks of Parental Leave, for example, you can only do so if all the time you have taken in the 12 months leading up to the planned Parental Leave will still give you time available without going over the 26 week leave-taking limit. The leaves your department will count toward the 26-week job hold are: Parental, Family Health, Short Term Disability, Workers' Compensation, or Personal Medical Leaves.

**Q: I had a baby on March 20, and already took a little more than four months off as short term disability. I just came back to my position at the beginning of August, and have been working full-time ever since. Do I qualify for taking more time off now?**

A: Since Parental Leave has just been introduced and is effective September 1, 2005, eligible parents may now begin taking leave time, so long as (1) their baby was born or the adoption process began after March 1, 2005; and (2) they have not already taken 26 weeks of leave time in the prior twelve months. In your case, you were out for four months, plus a few days. That should leave at least the four weeks of half pay, plus some more weeks available under the Parental Leave policy. You should discuss the use of this new benefit with your supervisor to find the best time to use your Parental Leave before March 20, 2006.

**Q: My mother has recently been diagnosed with a serious disease, and she has moved in with me while going through treatment. For this, I need to take her to a hospital in Boston once a week for six weeks, which means that I need to take two days off for each of these weeks. With all these new leaves, can I still take time off to help my mother?**

A: Yes, you have that opportunity under the new Family Health Leave policy. You should discuss work arrangements with your supervisor and work with him or her to fill out a Family Health Leave Request form. Your mother's medical providers will need to attest to her needs on a separate form for medical providers that you will be given by your supervisor and it will come to you in the mail from the Workers' Compensation/Disability Services unit of OHR. Once your Family Health Leave is approved you can begin taking the time you need. The leave is unpaid, but you may supplement your pay with accrued vacation. Some of your available sick leave accruals may also be used to supplement your pay during the time you need to help your mother.

**Q: What is the relationship between Cornell's Family Leaves for Staff and the federal FMLA?**

A: The federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), was designed by Congress to force employers across the nation to provide leave time for their employees during a family health crisis. At the time, Congress knew of the six states that already required employers to provide short term disability pay for employees. The lawmakers were trying to make leave time more uniformly available among all employers, regardless of the state of residence. New York was one of those six states and employers in New York already exceeded the requirements of the FMLA. Cornell's short term disability plan was designed to exceed the minimum requirements of the New York State law, so our employees have always enjoyed greater benefits than most employees in other states for a long time.

Cornell did implement aspects of the FMLA that involved the need for a leave to tend to a seriously ill family member. But now with the introduction of Parental Leave and Family Health Leave, Cornell once again exceeds substantially the minimum requirements of the federal legislation. Thus, by design, Cornell policies take care to assure employees that the guaranteed FMLA minimum requirements are more than fully met.

**Q: When will my federal family medical leave be counted?**

A: Since all of the leaves mentioned above expand on the minimum requirements of the federal law, all time taken during these Cornell leaves count both toward the Cornell allowances and the federal FMLA requirements. The leaves for which FMLA time is also counted are: Parental Leave, Family Health Leave, Short Term Disability Leave, Workers' Compensation Leave, and Personal Medical Leave.

**Q: Are fathers also allowed to take Parental Leave?**

A: Cornell staff who meet the eligibility requirements may certainly take the leave and that includes fathers.

**Q: Can my same-sex partner and I qualify for Parental Leave and Family Health Leave?**

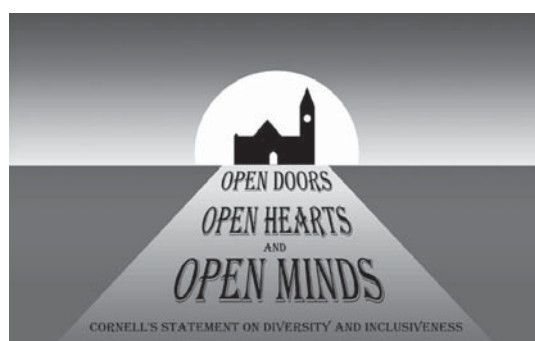
A: Yes, staff who plan to adopt or deliver a child themselves are certainly covered, regardless of marital status. Staff who are same-sex partners of primary parents (adoption papers often identify only one parent in a same-sex partnership) also may qualify for the provisions of Parental or Family Health Leaves. Benefit Services encourages same-sex couples to register as a household for access to other benefit programs as well.

**Q: My partner and I have chosen not to get married. Can I still take advantage of these new policies?**

A: Staff who are eligible for the leave and become birth-mothers or commence the adoption process may qualify for Parental Leave. Similarly, fathers who are eligible employees under this policy may take Parental Leave. For Family Health Leave, eligible employees do not need to be married to the seriously ill family member to qualify for the leave.

**Q: Are there any parental leave benefits for academic staff and faculty?**

A: Yes, there is the Leaves for Professors and Academic Staff Policy, which can be found at: [http://www.policy.cornell.edu/Vol6\\_2\\_1.cfm](http://www.policy.cornell.edu/Vol6_2_1.cfm).



Artwork by Andrés Arroyo

## Adoption Workshop

Parenting Skills:  
Learning About the  
Adoption Process

Date: 10/4/05, Tuesday

Time: 9 a.m.-noon (with  
lunch 12-1:30 p.m.)

Place: 423 ILR Conference  
Center

RSVP: Linda Haas Manley  
(607) 255-5298

The processes for becoming an adoptive parent can be challenging, confusing, expensive, and time and labor-intensive. Prospective adoptive and foster parents: join us for an informational workshop that covers the numerous facets of adoption. This workshop will help to answer many of the questions pre-adoptive and pre-foster parents may have and will provide support for these to-be parents who are considering or proceeding through the processes of adoption or becoming a foster parent.

For information and to register, please call Linda Haas Manley at (607) 255-5298.

## Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds

To celebrate the fifth anniversary of Cornell's "Open Doors, Open Hearts, and Open Minds" statement on diversity and inclusiveness, the university's Diversity Council will host a variety of events the week of September 26-30.

As part of the "Open Doors" initiative, Cornell's Organizational Development Services in the Office of Human Resources offers many workshops on inclusiveness and diversity. See bottom of page 5 for details.

## Life Cycles Workshops

### **Parenting Skills**

Surviving the Teen Years  
Parenting an Infant or Toddler  
The Stepparent's Role in Parenting  
Parenting Children with Special Needs  
Learning about the Adoption Process  
Behavior Management and Your Special Needs Child  
Transracial Adoption  
Building LGBT Families  
Strategies for Single Parents

### **Life Transitions**

Funding Elder Care  
An Overview of Elder Care Issues  
Caring for the Caregiver  
Welcome to the Community (new to Cornell/Ithaca)  
Grandparents Raising Children  
Learning about Transgender Issues

### **Work-Life Integration**

Learning about the Flexible Workplace Policy  
Negotiating a Flexible Work Arrangement  
Coming Out in the Workplace  
Managing Holiday Stress  
Learning about the Accommodation Processes (Religious and Disability)

### **Effective Relationships**

Partnerships with Your School Districts  
Supporting Friends or Family Coming Out  
Developing Relationships in Your New Community

## Cornell Offers a Variety of Professional and Personal Development Opportunities

A wealth of development opportunities exist at Cornell. The *Guide to Workshops for Staff and Faculty, 2005-2006*, was distributed to all staff in August, 2005, and is on-line at <[www.ohr.cornell.edu](http://www.ohr.cornell.edu)> and we hope you had a chance to review some of the many opportunities available for personal and professional growth, in and out of the classroom.

Whether it is taking an on-line course, a Cornell class or a Life Cycles workshop, or enrolling in a wellness program or personal growth activity, Cornell employees can find programs that will enrich their lives and enhance their careers while still helping to meet the needs of their departments.

If taking a course is part of your plan, Cornell has three options available to staff: 1) Extramural Study; 2) Employee Degree Program; and 3) Tuition Aid Program.

### **Extramural Study**

As an employee, you are invited to further your career, continue your education, or simply have fun learning something new through extramural study. With few exceptions, and with the approval of your supervisor, you may enroll in almost any course in the university (if space is available) and study with world-renowned faculty members.

## Life Cycles Workshops Help Balance Work and Personal Life

~Linda Haas Manley, WDELQ

"The information I received was invaluable!" That's just one reaction from a participant who took part in a Life Cycles Workshop on campus.

Cornell University is committed to promoting a work environment in which faculty and staff are viewed and respected as whole persons with identities and responsibilities that extend beyond the workplace. To assist in this goal, the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality, with assistance from Organizational Development Services, has developed a program

**"The panelists were wonderful. We are considering adoption and this program gave us some things to consider."**

~Learning about Adoption program participant

to address work-life integration, enhance parenting skills, respond to transitions at each life stage, and develop effective interpersonal relationships.

This year, in response to participant feedback, new topics and some expanded programs have been added. For instance, on October 4, "Learning about the Adoption Process" will offer participants the opportunity to learn from parents and agencies, speak with experts, and network with others who are in the process of adopting a child. The half-day conference format will allow

**"Thank you for holding this program. From the great discussion, I have some tools now that will help me in balancing my life!"**

~Dual Career Couples program participant

Regular Cornell full-time and part-time employees, and temporary employees who receive benefits, may be eligible each semester for up to four credits of tuition-free study in on-campus courses. For more information, please contact the School of Continuing Education, (607) 255-4987, e-mail: <[cusce@cornell.edu](mailto:cusce@cornell.edu)>, or on the web at <[www.sce.cornell.edu/exmu](http://www.sce.cornell.edu/exmu)>.

### **Employee Degree Program**

Staff are eligible to receive benefits through the Employee Degree Program after one year of regular full-time employment. Staff interested in pursuing a degree must apply and be selected as regular degree candidates in their field of study, and must gain the approval of their supervisor, department head, dean, or executive officer, and the Office of Human Resources. Benefits may be taxable. See HR Policy 6.10.4: Employee Degree Program for details or contact Benefit Services at (607) 255-3936, e-mail: <[benefits@cornell.edu](mailto:benefits@cornell.edu)>, or visit the web at <[www.ohr.cornell.edu](http://www.ohr.cornell.edu)>.

### **Tuition Aid Program**

After one year of regular full-time employment and prior approval, staff may receive reimbursement for current job-related or Cornell career-related courses offered by other institutions, including, BOCES, Tompkins Cortland Community College, and Empire State College. Regular part-time staff are eligible after three years of employment. Benefits may be taxable. See HR Policy 6.10.5: Tuition Aid Program for details or contact Benefit Services.

for more in-depth learning and an opportunity for prospective parents to make valuable connections. (See sidebar on page 3 for details.)

In response to past participant requests, we have developed additional parenting programs. The "Surviving the Teen Years" workshop has been expanded to be a three-part series. New topics include: The Step-

**"Thank you for offering this program. As the parent of a teenager, it was comforting to know that I am not alone in my struggles!"**

~Surviving the Teenage Years program participant

parents Role in Parenting; Behavior Management and Your Special Needs Child; Transracial Adoption; Elder Care: Caring for the Caregiver; Grandparents Raising Children; Learning about Transgender Issues; Managing Holiday Stress; and Learning about the Accommodation Processes at Cornell (Religious and Disability).

All workshops are free of charge. (See sidebar at left for titles.) For workshop descriptions and to register, go to the web at <<http://register.cit.cornell.edu:8000/>>. Call (607) 254-6400 for more information.

**"Hearing the actual costs for licensed and unlicensed services and the scenarios for what elder care will cost in the future was a real eye opener! I appreciate all of the information and support from others."**

~Funding Elder Care program participant

To register for Learning about the Adoption Process, contact Linda Haas Manley at (607) 255-5298.

## From Custodian to Office Professional: A Path More Frequently Traveled at Cornell

~Kathee Shaff, Office of Human Resources

What goes around, comes around. Dale Walter, facilities general manager of operations in Campus Life, is an advocate for staff development. "I had the opportunity to grow over the years, so I see it as a way to pay back Cornell."

**"Employees feel better about themselves and in turn, do better work."**

~Dale Walter, Campus Life Facilities

Dale celebrated twenty-five years of service to Cornell in June and has opened the doors of opportunity for many staff.

One such door has been opened for Penny Lockwood, a custodian in Housekeeping Services in Campus Life Facilities. After she was hired four years ago, Penny took some computer courses through CLASP (Community Learning and Service Partnership), and in 2003-2004, she participated in the Office Professionals Program (OPP). "After graduating from Office Professionals, I was excited to be offered an internship in the Campus Life Facilities Management office," commented Penny.

A strong supporter of education, Dale sees staff gaining from these programs by obtaining a good knowledge base to share with others and a skill set they can use for job growth. From a manager's viewpoint, and as Penny's supervisor, Dale talked about the win-win situation in his office and said, "Both Penny and the department are winners. The Office Professionals Program has given Penny a good foundation to build on and she has taken it upon herself to continue her learning with SkillSoft courses." Dale and Penny both agree that the Office Professionals Program has provided her with more than just the basic skills needed to perform office duties. "It was a step in the right direction toward an office professional career and it has boosted my self esteem," remarked Penny.

Aided by a Campus Life Facilities release time program, created in 2001 in response to the Human Resource Policy 6.10.2: Workshops and Seminars and Career Development, Penny was able to attend weekly classes for two hours from September through March. Although she had her own housekeeping schedule to maintain in the resident halls, she was able to successfully handle her workload and classes. Penny said her supervisor and coworkers have been (and still are) very supportive of her efforts.

During her year-long internship, Penny has worked for different departments in Campus Life, including Hasbrouck-Graduate and Professional Student Housing office, Business Services, and the Campus Life

**"It was a step in the right direction toward an office professional career and it has boosted my self esteem."** ~Penny Lockwood, Campus Life Facilities

Management office. Penny added, "My internship was recently extended and I'm looking forward to continuing with the Facilities office to gain as much knowledge as I can. I hope to expand my skills and then move into a permanent administrative position at Cornell."

Penny learned about the Office Professionals Program through Cindy Lockwood, a trainer/quality assurance coordinator in Campus Life. Applications for career development are distributed at the annual all-staff gathering, where staff are encouraged to participate in a variety of programs. Staff are responsible for completing their daily work schedules ensuring operating standards are maintained. Cindy reported that each year approximately 50 out of 130 staff members take advantage of Cornell's programs, with about 10 staff members going to Wellness programs, 15 going to CLASP, and 20 - 30 attending individual workshops.

**"All of these programs open doors that may never have been opened before. We have worked hard to build a culture and environment that is nurturing and positive."**

~Cindy Lockwood,  
Campus Life Facilities

At least three Facilities staff members have gone through the Office Professionals Certificate Program and have obtained jobs within Campus Life; at least five have gone on to other job opportunities at the university within the Office Professional realm; many Office Professionals graduates have learned valuable skills during internships within other Campus Life functional units; and a number of staff have received their GED or high school diplomas through the CLASP program. This year there were three staff who received their high school diplomas.

Personal challenges and growth, the ability to grow professionally, and the chance to explore career-enhancing opportunities are pluses for staff. Providing developmental activities for staff also benefits the department in many ways, as Cindy pointed out. These include: better staff retention, better attendance, and the potential for a reduction of injuries. Dale agreed, "Employees seem very happy, less stressed, and more motivated. It makes them proud and increases their self worth and self esteem."

"Employees feel better about themselves and in turn, do better work," said Dale. "If we are able to promote our staff and they stay at Cornell, don't we all gain?"

The internships that Campus Life offers are also valuable for both the departments and the individuals, Dale points out, as staff already have first-hand knowledge of the residential halls and the needs of students. Penny noted that in one of her courses she learned how to stay composed in sticky situations. This has helped her deal calmly with students and parents who call with problems or concerns.

"All of these programs open doors that may never have been opened before. We have worked hard to build a culture and environment that is nurturing and positive," Cindy concluded.

Cindy and Dale would be happy to share their experiences about career development efforts in Campus Life. Contact Cindy Lockwood at <c1114@cornell.edu> or Dale Walter at <dgw3@cornell.edu>.



Dale Walter and Penny Lockwood review a work order for a residential hall.

Kathee Shaff, OHR

## Open Doors, Open Hearts, and Open Minds: Cornell Celebrates Its Diversity

Throughout the week of September 26-30, in celebration of the fifth anniversary of the "Open Doors" statement on diversity and inclusiveness, Cornell community members will encounter decorated archways across campus symbolizing the "Open Doors" campus and the university's broad range of diversity.

The Office of Human Resources is committed to creating an inclusive environment for Cornell staff and is responsible for promoting diversity and inclusiveness across campus through its various functional offices and through the programs and policies it develops for the Cornell community.

The *Guide to Workshops for Staff and Faculty, 2005-2006* lists many classes and workshops. (See sidebar on page 4 for Life Cycles workshops that are inclusive of many topics.) Instructor-led diversity workshops offered by Organizational Development Services (ODS) include: Cross-Cultural Communications; Hiring Managers Guide to Diversity Recruitment; and Sustaining Mutual Respect: Exploring Workplace Issues Through Theatre and Dialogue.

On-line diversity courses through SkillSoft include: Why Diversity Matters; Designing a Diversity Initiative; Diversity in the Future; Getting Past Clashes: Valuing Team Diversity; Stakeholder Interests and Cultural Diversity; Organizational Inclusion; Workplace Diversity; Management Skills for the Diverse Workforce; and Culture and Behavior.

For more information on SkillSoft courses or instructor-led courses, call ODS at 254-6400. For more information on the "Open Doors" anniversary events, contact Connie Park in the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality at 255-3224.

## SkillSoft Topic Areas

~Business (700+ courses)  
~Desktop (200+ courses)  
~IT (1200+ courses)

### Business Topics:

Administrative Support  
Business Law  
Business Operations  
Communication  
Consulting Skills  
Customer Service  
eBusiness  
eLearning  
Finance  
Human Resources  
Knowledge Management  
Leadership  
Management  
Marketing  
Personal Development  
Project Management  
Sales  
Strategic Planning  
Team Building

### Desktop Computer Skills:

Microsoft Office (Access, Excel, FrontPage, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word, Visio); Internet Explorer; Netscape; Lotus Notes; Adobe Acrobat; Seagate Crystal Reports; Home Networking; PDAs

### IT Topics:

Software Development (Java Programming; Java Web Development; Microsoft.NET; C++; ANSI C; Lotus Domino; Rational Rose)

Operating Systems and Server Technologies (CompTIA+ and Server+; Microsoft.NET Server; Microsoft Windows XP and 2000; Microsoft Exchange 2003; Linux; UNIX; Lotus Domino; IBM Websphere; IBM DB2; Microsoft Enterprise Servers)

Internet and Network Technologies (Network Protocols: TCP/IP; CompTIA iNET+; Data/Telecommunications; Wireless Communications; Security Principles; Cisco)

Enterprise Data Systems (Oracle; Systems & Database Design; Microsoft SQL)

Web Design (Principles; Tools; Macromedia: ColdFusion, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Flash, Freehand; Microsoft FrontPage; Adobe: GoLive, Illustrator, ImageReady, Photoshop; Scripting and Web Languages: XML, Java-Script, Microsoft VBScript, DHTML)

Project Effectiveness (Project Management: Essentials; Integration Mgt; Scope Mgt; Time Mgt; Cost Mgt; Quality Mgt; Human Resource Mgt; Communications Mgt; Risk Mgt; Procurement Mgt; Basics for Business Professionals; Mgt for IT Professionals; Strategic Mgt for IT Projects; Team Building)

## SkillSoft On-Line Learning

More than 2,000 on-line courses are offered free of charge through SkillSoft, a leading provider of e-learning solutions. See sidebar at left for subjects in the three main topic areas.

To learn more about SkillSoft, attend an open house (see list at right). For information, contact Organizational Development Services at (607) 254-6400 or <org\_dev@cornell.edu>.

## SkillSoft Open Houses

Open houses are held from noon – 1:00 p.m. at G25 Stimson Hall. Register at: <<http://register.cit.cornell.edu:8000/>> using course numbers below.

September 21 [3346]	March 29 [3352]
October 17 [3347]	April 18 [3353]
November 30 [3348]	May 24 [3354]
December 15 [3349]	June 27 [3355]
January 25 [3350]	July 25 [3356]
February 27 [3351]	August 17 [3357]

## A Sampling of SkillSoft Business Courses

Advancing Your Administrative Career	ADM0105
Using Effective Business Communication	ADM0103
Managing Yourself and Those Around You	ADM0112
Partnering with Your Boss	ADM0113
Communication Skills for the Workplace	COMM0003
Writing to Reach the Audience	COMM0015
Emotional Intelligence at Work	COMM0142
Enhancing Your Listening Skills	COMM0154
Communicating Effectively with Difficult Coworkers	COMM016S
Business Etiquette and Professionalism	COMM0180
Optimizing Email at Work	COMM0232
Delivering Successful Presentations	COMM0300
Leading Effective Business Meetings	COMM0332
Dealing with Conflict in the Workplace	COMM0340
Telephone Skills for Business Professionals	COMM0410
Getting Results from the Boss	COMM0516
Giving Feedback: A Manager's Guide	COMM0525
Managing Cultural Divides	COMM0601
Fundamentals of Exceptional Customer Service	CUST0102
Call Center Customer Service	CUST0113
Serving Your Internal Customers	CUST0124
Technical Support Essentials	CUST0162
Essentials of Internal Consulting	CONS0121
Creating and Analyzing an Operating Budget	FIN0161
Introduction to Internal Auditing	FIN0232
Designing a Diversity Initiative	HR0023
Behavioral Interviewing: Preparing as the Interviewee	HR0215
Recruiting Successfully	HR0223
Putting Knowledge to Work	KNOW0103
Knowledge as Strategy: Performance Improvement	KNOW0111

Potential of Self-Directed Learning	KNOW0113
Employment and Labor Law	LAW0103
Intellectual Property and Proprietary Rights	LAW0105
Leadership: Energizing and Empowering Employees	LEAD0123
Leadership Skills for Women	LEAD0130
Leading through Change	LEAD0147
Succession Planning Overview	LEAD0301
Lead and Communicate Effectively as a New Manager	MGMT0003
Continuous Learning for Tomorrow's Managers	MGMT0116
Leadership Development for Technical Professionals	MGMT0124
Effective Mentoring	MGMT0251
Implementing an Organization-wide Mentoring Program	MGMT0253
Achieving Success with the Help of a Mentor	MGMT0255
Developing Career Plans for Your Technical Professionals	MGMT0294
Hiring Temporary Employees	MGMT0702
Creating a Marketing Campaign	MKT0206
Managing Customer Driven Process Improvement	OPER0120
Get Your Career on the Fast Track	PD0131
Financing Your Family's Education	PD0145
Planning for Retirement	PD0147
Techniques for Better Time Management	PD0152
Finding Your Life Balance	PD0181
Success over Stress	PD0182
Dealing with Organizational Change	PD0190
Self-Empowerment: Managing from Within	PD0262
Developing a Positive Attitude	PD0264
Introduction to Project Management	PROJ0511
Technology Forecasting	STGY0311
Redesigning Your Organization	STGY0405
Effective Team-building Strategies	TEAM0171
Making Teams Work	TEAM0210

### ~ Comments on SkillSoft ~

*"SkillSoft is a great learning experience both personally and professionally. You can go at your own pace, take as many or as few courses as you want, and it's interactive."*

~Sara Spoonhower, AA&D

*"SkillSoft was a great experience and I enjoyed the on-line courses."*

~Elaine Davis, CALS

*"SkillSoft classes are very well done for what they are, single topic and relatively short to complete."*

~Mariann Carpenter, CIT

## A Quest for a New Job

Although Cornell offers a wide variety of jobs and many staff transfer within Cornell several times over the course of their careers, finding a job at Cornell can be difficult. Fortunately for high-performing staff who meet certain criteria, Cornell's Quest Program can be helpful in pursuing other positions at Cornell. Quest offers assistance with mock interviews, cover letters, and resumes, and helps to identify skills that can be matched to a position.

***"The more you learn about yourself, the more you can improve."*** ~Tammy Babcock, CIT

Tammy Babcock, administrative assistant in Direct Support - Information Systems, Cornell Information Technologies, used the Quest Program to move to a new position. "My experience with Quest was both challenging and rewarding," she said.

After being in a position for nine years, Tammy was interested in launching out in a new direction. Tammy's supervisor recognized her commitment and dedication to being a high performer and was supportive of her request to join the program. Being a high performer and having supervisor approval are two of the criteria for the program. (See criteria at right.)

Through Quest, Tammy was critiqued and received honest information after interviews. She found this experience very beneficial. "The more you learn about yourself, the more you can improve," Tammy concluded.

"I am thankful that the Quest Program exists, as it gave me the reinforcement I needed to get out of my comfort zone and be successful in reaching a new position within Cornell," Tammy explained. Reaching a career goal is satisfying and is reflected both professionally and personally.

Former Geneva employee, Michele Mannella, took advantage of the Quest Program to land a new job on campus as a graduate program coordinator in the Department of English. Michele was excited

when she found out she qualified for Quest. "I was thrilled to learn that as an exemplary employee my

***"I found the perfect job for me—exactly what I was looking for."*** ~Michele Mannella, English

application would be accompanied by an additional recommendation from the Quest Program." Being proactive in her job search, Michele became familiar with the Skills for Success interview questions, and Deb Billups, Quest Program manager, helped her to clarify her goals and responses.

"Deb was incredibly supportive of my efforts, and I felt that in such a short time she really knew me and the type of job that would be a good match. That is a great gift she has," added Michele.

"I found the perfect job for me—exactly what I was looking for. It makes my time at work much more interesting and productive," commented Michele. "As an added benefit, working on main campus has enabled me to commit to a regular exercise schedule by joining the Wellness Program and taking advantage of all the membership benefits. This, combined with being challenged more during my working hours, makes me feel more energetic, even in my personal life."

***"The encouragement that I received was second to none."*** ~Sara Spoonhower, AA&D

Sara Spoonhower, administrative assistant in Alumni Affairs and Development, also recently transferred to another position at Cornell with the help of the Quest Program. Sara described her experience with Quest. "The Quest Program was a wonderful experience for me. Deb Billups helped me find a position that I love. Even though she was helping several people, she always knew who I was and what I was looking for in a job. She always followed up and gave me great feedback about my interviews and I never felt discouraged from applying for any position. The encouragement that I received was second to none."

## Cornell's Quest Program

Quest (Qualified University Employees Seeking Transfer) is a performance-based employee internal transfer assistance program.

To be eligible for the Quest program, candidates must:

- be a demonstrated high performer in current position (High performance is demonstrated by an overall performance rating of "Frequently exceed expectations/standards" or higher.)
- be a current Cornell regular nonacademic or bargaining unit employee, full- or part-time
- have completed 12 months of continuous service in good standing in current position
- not be currently following a performance improvement plan for their current position and have not had a disciplinary action within 12 months
- be referred by the current supervisor and local HR representative.

For more information about Quest, please contact Deb Billups, program manager, at <dav5@cornell.edu> or (607) 254-8239.

## eCornell Offers Staff Personal and Professional Growth

eCornell now offers on-line learning to Cornell employees at discounted prices. (See sidebar at right.) Mariann Carpenter, Network Operations Center manager, Cornell Information Technologies, a 35-year employee, enrolled in the eCornell certificate program for Human Resources Studies.

To complete her certificate program, Mariann had to take eleven on-line classes. The classes gave her insight into her job as a manager of technical staff. "These classes made me aware of the responsibilities of a manager, and provided excellent reference materials for future questions and situations that will certainly arise. It's made a big difference in how I am perceived on the job."

The courses provided both professional and personal growth for Mariann. "I use some piece of information from the classes every day. I know how to find information, and more importantly, when to call in the HR professionals to help," noted Mariann. "Personally, I'm more confident in my ability to do my job. I interact with the staff differently. I'm able to find answers to their questions quickly and accurately."

Because the courses are on-line, Mariann was able to take them at her convenience. "The classes fit my schedule. Sometimes I would work in the afternoon, early evening, late at night, or on weekends. When I had the time, and the inclination, there was the course work, and the other students in my group, waiting for me."

Mariann enjoys on-line learning and added, "I will continue signing up for classes that interest me and also that support my job requirements."

***"These classes made me aware of the responsibilities of a manager, and provided excellent reference materials."***

~Mariann Carpenter, CIT

Please note that Cornell staff may be able to receive financial assistance, in addition to the discounted tuition rates noted in sidebar at right, through Cornell's Tuition Aid Program. Contact Benefit Services at (607) 255-3936 for information.

## eCornell

Cornell University employees are eligible for special discounted tuition rates for eCornell courses through an arrangement with the Office of Human Resources. Certificates can be earned in:

- \* Human Resources Studies
- \* Supervisory Skills
- \* Executive Leadership: Preparing for an Uncertain Future
- \* Proactive Leadership Studies
- \* Business Leadership Skills for HR Professionals
- \* Financial Management for Making Business Decisions
- \* Essentials of Hospitality Management
- \* Foodservice Management

To find out more about eCornell courses or certificate programs, contact Client Services Manager, Kathryn Coldren at 607-330-3332, e-mail: <clientservices@ecornell.com> or visit the Cornell University eCornell partner web page at: <www.ecornell.com/goto/cu>.



## Child Care Grant Subsidy Program

Cornell University is dedicated to helping faculty and staff meet the cost of quality child care by helping to subsidize the expense with the Child Care Grant Subsidy Program, now in its fifth year.

### New This Year

For this year, because of the rising cost of infant and toddler care and the limited availability for these types of care, the amount available for these types of care has been increased.

In addition, to provide more opportunities for school-age children to have a summer camp experience, the amount of funds available for summer care for this age group has also been increased.

### Eligibility Requirements

Members of Cornell faculty and staff who are benefits-eligible and have children ages 12 and under in any of the following types of legal child care are eligible to apply for the grant:

- a licensed child care provider
- a registered family care provider
- an after-school program listed with the Day Care Council

- an informal/in-home provider, with a social security or Tax ID Number, who meets minimum health and safety requirements set by the Day Care Council
- summer day camp.

Awards for part-time employees who are benefits-eligible will be pro-rated according to the number of hours worked.

### Application Information and Deadlines

Applications for the 2005-06 grant year can be obtained by contacting Benefit Services, (607) 255-3936, e-mail: <benefits@cornell.edu> or a copy can be printed at: <www.ohr.cornell.edu>. Application deadline is October 7.

## DFA Classes Contribute to Cornell Financial Understanding

For staff development in Cornell's financial arena, the Division of Financial Affairs (DFA) offers courses in many areas, including accounting, cash management, financial administration, payroll, and purchasing. DFA also offers a 14-week Accounting Certificate Program. Many staff have found this program beneficial in performing the duties required in their financial positions.

David Harrington, account representative in the Business Service Center in Alumni Affairs and Development, recently completed the instructor-led accounting program and found the

classes very helpful with his job. "I feel more comfortable doing my job after taking the classes. I have a better understanding of how the different aspects of my job relate to each other," David reported.

Long-time employee Elaine Davis, financial reporting specialist in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, also recently completed the Accounting Certificate Program. Although it was not required for Elaine's job, the program was strongly encouraged as a refresher. "Cornell is constantly updating its policies and procedures and even a veteran employee needs a refresher to learn the 'new and improved' way of doing old tasks," Elaine commented.

David and Elaine both agreed that Steve Jackson, manager of Customer Training & Devel-

opment in DFA, was a great instructor and he did a great job with the training program. They also acknowledged that their supervisors were very supportive and allowed them to take time out of the office on a regular basis to attend training.

Elaine described her experience as very energetic, and having class participants become resources for her was a plus. "It was great to participate with a group of employees who were doing the same type of work as I was, tackling the same obstacles, and who were willing to share their experiences and resolutions," Elaine remarked.

"The knowledge that I got from the other people in the class was just as useful as what was taught in the class," David added.

## Wellness Classes are Rewarding

Kathy Carpenter, administrative assistant in Computer Science recently embarked on a 12-week wellness class, "From Walking to Running," and remarked, "While this class was one of the most difficult things I've ever done, it's also proven to be one of (if not) THE most rewarding!"

Admitting that she had never been able to jog before because she got winded very quickly, Kathy noticed that at the start of the class, running three minutes nonstop was a difficult feat. However, at the end of the 12-week program, she could maintain up to 30+ minutes of running, covering 2.5 - 3 miles. "It's amazing how far we've come!" Kathy remarked. "This entire class has been an inspiration for me about

pushing myself beyond what I thought was possible to reach some never before attainable level."

Kathy said that the class was very empowering and changed her life personally. She now believes she can accomplish anything. "There is nothing I cannot conquer!"

Running twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) at noontime in the heat of the summer, this summer in particular, was a BIG challenge. However, Kathy persevered and was most inspired by the class. "The power of the group was incredible! I liked the group dynamics and the instructor, Kerry Howell, was very motivational and supportive."

Not new to wellness programs at Cornell, Kathy has participated in the "lunch time express" exercise class (jazzercise, step, etc.) held at 12:15 pm every workday. Kathy's

advice to others thinking about a wellness class: "Take a risk, give things a try that you may never have considered in the past! The outcome might be remarkable."

### C.U. Wellness Program

The Wellness Program provides all faculty, staff, and retirees with educational and physical opportunities that promote a positive lifestyle. There is a full range of classes and programs available. Please see details in the recently distributed Wellness brochure outlining fall outreach programs and activities. Contact Wellness at 255-3886 or visit the web at <bigred2.athletics.cornell.edu/wellness>.

## ~ Publication Information ~

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### Cornell University Statement on Equal Education and Employment Opportunity

Cornell University has an enduring commitment to support equality of education and employment opportunity by affirming the value of diversity and by promoting an environment free from discrimination.

Association with Cornell, either as a student, faculty, or staff member, involves participation in a free community where all people are recognized and rewarded on the basis of individual performance rather than personal convictions, appearance, preferences (including sexual or affectional orientation), or happenstance of birth.

Cornell University's history of diversity and inclusion encourages all students, faculty and staff to support a diverse and inclusive university in which to work, study, teach, research, and serve.

No person shall be denied admission to any educational program or activity or be denied employment on the basis of any legally prohibited discrimination involving, but not limited to, such factors as race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran status. Cornell University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

Concerns and complaints related to equal opportunity in education and in employment based on aspects of diversity protected under federal, state, and local law, including sexual harassment complaints filed by any member of the Cornell community against an academic or non-academic staff member, as well as complaints arising under Title IX should be directed to the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality, 160 Day Hall, Ithaca, New York 14853-2081 (Telephone: 607-255-3976, Fascimile 607-255-7481, Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, 607-255-7066, <www.ohr.cornell.edu/contactHR/index.html>).

Cornell University is committed to assisting those persons with disabilities who have special needs related to their educational pursuit or employment. Information on services provided to prospective and current Cornell students with disabilities can be obtained by contacting the Student Disability Services Office, 429 Computing and Information Center, Ithaca, New York 14853-2081 (Telephone: 607-254-4545, Fascimile 607-255-1562, Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, 607-255-7665, www.clt.cornell.edu). Prospective and current employees in need of a workplace accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act or New York state law should contact Workers Compensation and Disability Services, Surge 3 Facility, Ithaca, New York 14853 (Telephone 607-255-3708, Fascimile 607-255-9649, Telecommunications for the Deaf 607-255-7066).

### Drug-Free Workplace

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 requires Cornell, as a federal contractor and grant recipient, to certify that it will provide a drug-free workplace. Accordingly, it is the university's policy to maintain a drug-free workplace. As a condition of employment on such contracts and grants, employees will abide by the terms of this statement and notify Cornell of any criminal drug statute conviction not later than five days after such conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, use, or sale in the workplace of a controlled substance, as defined by state or federal law, is prohibited. The university will not condone criminal activity on its property, or on property under its direct control, and will take appropriate personnel action up to and including termination or required participation in a drug-abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

### Campus Security Programs Report

In compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act, a report containing information concerning campus security programs can be found on-line at <http://www.cupolice.cornell.edu>. Included in the report are:

- recommended personal safety practices,
- the authority of the Cornell Police and campus disciplinary procedures,
- a statement advising the campus community how to obtain information provided by New York State about registered sex offenders,
- campus crime statistics for the most recent three-year period, and
- other pertinent safety and crime prevention information.

A printed version of this report (*Campus Watch*) is distributed each fall to students, staff, and faculty; a copy may be requested from the Cornell Police Crime Prevention Unit, G-2 Barton Hall, Ithaca, NY 14850-1701, or by calling (607) 255-7305 or (607) 255-7404.