

Cornell University

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Cornell chooses seasoned educational leader David J. Skorton as its next president

Board of Trustees approves appointment of University of Iowa president and physician today

ITHACA, N.Y. — Dr. David J. Skorton, president of the University of Iowa, was appointed Cornell University's 12th president by the Cornell Board of Trustees at a special on-campus meeting Saturday, Jan. 21.

A cardiologist, national leader in research ethics and musician, Skorton, 56, will assume the presidency on July 1, 2006. He will hold faculty appointments in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at Weill-Cornell Medical College (WCMC) in New York City, and in Biomedical Engineering at the College of Engineering on the Ithaca campus. Hunter R. Rawlings will continue to serve as Cornell's interim president until Skorton takes office.

"We're very pleased and excited that we have a dynamic new president with proven leadership, diverse interests and a strong background and passion not only for the sciences but for the arts and humanities as well," said Diana Daniels, Cornell trustee and chair of the search committee. "David is a true renaissance man: an executive and academician who still finds time to practice medicine and share his love for music with the public. Energetic and engaging, he is ideally suited to marshal the talent and resources of the entire university to maximize its potential as a world leader in research and education."

"An eminent physician, scholar and accomplished leader, Dr. Skorton has established an impressive record of leadership at the University of Iowa," Board of Trustees chair Peter C. Meinig observed. "He has demonstrated a deep commitment to excellence in interdisciplinary higher education and a thoughtful appreciation for the role a publicly-supported institution plays in society. We are delighted that he will be bringing his wide range of talents and warm personality to Cornell."

Commenting about his appointment, Dr. Skorton said, "I am honored and humbled to assume the presidency of this great institution, which truly is one of the best universities in the world. Cornell University is justly known for its excellence in research, scholarly and creative activity; for the breadth and depth of quality among its many disciplines; for its commitment to undergraduate education; and for its health care, which also ranks among the world's best.

"These are qualities that I have also admired in the University of Iowa. Because of its land grant mission, Cornell, like Iowa, is devoted to public service that brings it close to the people of the state. It's a tremendous opportunity and challenge to be asked to sustain and extend Cornell's enviable traditions and achievements," Dr. Skorton said.

"I have a very high regard for him as a person, as a professor and as a university president," Hunter R. Rawlings, Cornell's 10th president, commented. "He's a first-rate intellect with a great intellectual curiosity and a wonderful sense of humor. As president of the University of Iowa, I appointed David to the position of Vice President for Research in 1992. And so, I am extremely pleased to have him join us here at Cornell.

“He’s had appointments in both medicine and engineering in Iowa, so he is ideally suited to help oversee initiatives that bring together life sciences both at Ithaca and the Weill medical college,” Rawlings added.

“Cornell is fortunate to have found a president with David Skorton’s intellectual breadth, talents and academic values,” said Cornell Provost Biddy Martin. “His medical and scientific expertise combined with his devotion to the arts and humanities and with his appreciation of the land grant mission make him a wonderful choice to lead Cornell. He will bring valuable experience, energy and creativity to the position. I look forward to working with him, and I am excited about what the university can achieve under his leadership. We are also very lucky to have Dr. Robin Davisson, an outstanding researcher and mentor, who is Dr. Skorton’s wife, join our faculty.”

“I’m very excited by the selection of David Skorton to Cornell University,” added Antonio M. Gotto, Jr., the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean and professor of medicine at the Weill-Cornell Medical College. “I’ve known him for more than 20 years because of his work in the medical field and particularly in the field of cardiology. I have great respect for him, and I think he’ll be a superb president.”

Cornell President Emeritus Frank H. T. Rhodes noted, “His many interests will be a uniting force for the university, combining the life sciences and medicine, the Manhattan campus with the Ithaca campus—and the Doha campus for that matter.

“He’s a very seasoned president and a very experienced academic leader,” Rhodes continued. “He’s been close to the action in very significant senior positions. So he understands the issues and is clearly somebody who has a real awareness of what it means to occupy a presidential position and what it means to tackle the endless challenges that it involves.”

On the need to maintain diversity at Cornell, Elizabeth Moore, ILR ’75, a Cornell trustee and a member of the Presidential Search Committee, recalled, “He spoke eloquently and with personal conviction about the importance of ensuring access and opportunity for success to people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, especially given America’s rapidly changing demographics.”

Commenting on Dr. Skorton’s selection, Daniels noted that “this is also a great opportunity to appoint Dr. Robin Davisson to the faculty in colleges on both the Ithaca and New York City campuses. Robin is a rising star in her field of research.” On the process of the search, Daniels added, “I do not think Cornell could have a better search committee. Being as large as it was (27 members), we had an outstanding group of Cornellians. I am also very appreciative of the work of the two advisory groups of deans and faculty, whose input in the process was invaluable. Everyone worked extremely hard to do the best job possible to find Cornell’s 12th president—and we succeeded.”

Skorton will succeed Rawlings, Cornell’s 10th president, who has been serving on an interim basis since Jeffrey Lehman, Cornell’s 11th president, resigned in June 2005.

Skorton was appointed the 19th president of the University of Iowa in March 2003 after more than 20 years in various faculty and administrative positions there. He holds joint appointments at the rank of professor in the departments of Internal Medicine, Electrical and Computer Engineering and Biomedical Engineering. His previous administrative posts include vice president for research and vice president for external relations. Skorton introduced state-funded initiatives for the biosciences and for the arts and humanities. The latter, which has become a national model, provided critical funding for arts and humanities scholarship. A co-founder and co-director of the Adolescent and Adult Congenital Heart Disease Clinic at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Skorton’s research has focused on cardiac imaging, computer image processing and on congenital heart disease in adults. He has published extensively in all three areas.

As Iowa president, Skorton has focused on the university's commitments to diversity, economic development, the health sciences, intercollegiate athletics and public service. To advance the university's strengths and the national agenda, Skorton declared 2004–05 the Year of the Arts and Humanities, with a competitive grants program, two major arts festivals and dozens of events on campus and throughout the state. Along with Cornell Provost Bidy Martin, he serves on the Association of American Universities/American Council of Learned Societies Humanities Steering Committee.

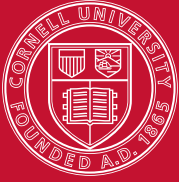
Skorton has been a steadfast proponent of international education and research ethics throughout his medical and academic career. He served as charter president of the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc., the organization that accredits human research protection programs. Earlier this month he joined college presidents, including Hunter Rawlings, and other educational leaders selected to take part in the U.S. Summit of University Presidents on International Education in Washington, D.C.

Skorton has been active in public service to his community and to his state, serving on the Iowa City Area Development Group, committees of the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the Cedar Rapids Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors, the Iowa Business Council, the Iowa Department of Economic Development Board, the Governor's Life Sciences Advisory Committee and the Iowa Research Council.

Skorton, whose father was a Russian immigrant, earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1970 and an M.D. in 1974, both at Northwestern University. After serving his medical residency and cardiology fellowship at the University of California at Los Angeles, Skorton came to the University of Iowa as an instructor in 1980. An avid musician who once worked as a professional jazz and R&B musician in the Chicago area, he plays saxophone and flute and is co-host of a weekly program, *As Night Falls—Latin Jazz*, on KSUI- pFM, one of the University of Iowa's public radio stations.

Davisson is an associate professor of anatomy and cell biology at the University of Iowa. She will join the Cornell faculty with a joint appointment in Biomedical Sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine on the Ithaca campus and in Cell and Developmental Biology at Weill-Cornell Medical College in New York City. Dr. Skorton has a son who is a student at Stanford University.

Additional links: For full details and photos of David J. Skorton and past Cornell presidents, visit the Cornell Presidential Web site at: <http://www.cornell.edu/presidentsearch/>.



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DAVID J. SKORTON

- A certified cardiologist with joint professorships in internal medicine, electrical and computer engineering, and biomedical engineering; a jazz musician with a lifelong interest in the arts.
- As president of the University of Iowa, Skorton oversaw operation of an institution with 11 colleges, nearly 30,000 students, 1,700 faculty, 14,000 staff and total annual expenditures of \$2.2 billion. Established in 1847, the University of Iowa is a major national research university with widely respected programs in genetics, biomedical engineering, biomedical sciences and pharmacology education; it is home of the famous Iowa Writers' Workshop and the Big Ten Hawkeye athletic program.
- Skorton is co-founder and co-director of the Adolescent and Adult Congenital Heart Disease Clinic at the University of Iowa, and he has continued his clinic practice even after being named president of the university in 2003. His research on congenital heart disease, cardiac imaging and computer image processing has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Heart Association and by private industry. He has published more than 200 articles, reviews, book chapters and two major texts in the areas of cardiac imaging and image processing.
- A national leader in research ethics, Skorton is charter president of the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs Inc., the first entity organized specifically to accredit human research protection programs. He also has been a member of the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine, the American Society of Echocardiography, the Association of American Universities and the Council on Competitiveness.
- In 1992, Skorton was appointed as vice president for research by then-president of the University of Iowa, Hunter R. Rawlings, later to become Cornell's 10th president and current interim president. From March 2002 until he assumed the presidency Skorton served as vice president for research and external relations. As vice president, he oversaw more than 30 administrative units and headed a research and

development program that ranks among the nation's top 20 public research universities in obtaining external funding. Yearly totals for support from outside of state government more than doubled during his tenure, from \$150 million to \$341 million.

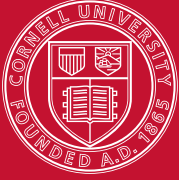
- Skorton's presidency has focused on the University of Iowa's commitments to economic development, the arts and humanities, the health sciences (including direct oversight of the Academic Health Sciences Center), intercollegiate athletics and public service.
 - Skorton declared 2004-05 the Year of the Arts and Humanities, during which numerous programs on campus and throughout the state celebrated the importance of the arts and humanities as public culture. He serves on the Association of American Universities/ American Council of Learned Societies Humanities Steering Committee.
 - He declared 2005-06 the Year of Public Engagement, encouraging the university community to intensify its efforts and sharpen its focus on engagement with the public and public issues at the local, state, national and international levels.
 - Skorton's economic development activities include past and current memberships in the Iowa City Area Development Group, committees of the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the Cedar Rapids Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors, the Iowa Business Council, the Iowa Department of Economic Development Board, the Governor's Life Sciences Advisory Committee and the Iowa Research Council, of which he was president from 1999 to 2001.

Personal Information

- Skorton was born Nov. 22, 1949, in Milwaukee, Wis. His father, Sam, left what is now Belarus after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Sam Skorton, a shoe store owner, moved his family to Los Angeles when David Skorton was 9.
- He began playing alto saxophone at age 9 and contemplated a career as a musician, but his father – who never finished high

school himself – wanted his son to get a college education. Skorton entered UCLA but later transferred to Northwestern University to complete a major in psychology in 1970.

- In the course of his undergraduate studies, Skorton developed a deep interest in the sciences and philosophy that found its perfect expression in medicine. Skorton completed his medical degree at Northwestern in 1974 and returned to UCLA for his internship and residency and a cardiology fellowship in 1978-1979. During that time he became chief resident in the department of medicine.
- While at UCLA for his postgraduate work, Skorton worked with electrical engineers on a project to apply recently declassified remote-sensing technology from to medical imaging. This led to a lifelong interest in engineering as applied to imaging technology.
- Skorton was hired as assistant professor at the University of Iowa in 1981. He eventually achieved full professorships in the departments of internal medicine, electrical and computer engineering, and biomedical engineering.
- Shortly after arriving at the University of Iowa, Skorton assumed the first in a series of administrative posts:
 - Director, Cardiovascular Image Processing Laboratory, 1982-1996
 - Director, Division of General Internal Medicine, 1986-1989
 - Associate chairman for clinical programs, Department of Internal Medicine, 1989-1992
 - Vice President for Research, 1992-2002
 - Vice President for Research and External Relations, 2002-2003
 - President, 2003-2006
- Skorton is married to researcher Robin L. Davisson, associate professor of anatomy and cell biology at the University of Iowa. Davisson's research focuses on the basic mechanisms of function, control and signaling in the cardiovascular system in health and disease. Her investigations employ the interdisciplinary approach of "functional genomics," a new endeavor at the interface of classical physiology and molecular genetics. She has published numerous original research and review articles and book chapters, and has given invited presentations throughout the United States as well as in South America, Europe and Asia.
- Skorton continues to play jazz saxophone and flute, and hosts a weekly Latin jazz radio program, As Night Falls, on KSUI-FM, the University of Iowa public radio station.



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CORNELL AT A GLANCE

Founded in 1865, Cornell is an Ivy League research university comprising seven undergraduate colleges and seven graduate and professional schools. With total enrollment of more than 20,000 students from all over the world, and top-rated programs in architecture, business, engineering, hotel administration, human and veterinary medicine, human development, the humanities, labor and employment issues, law, and life sciences, the university embodies Ezra Cornell's vision of "an institution where any person can find instruction in any study."

Cornell's commitment to high-quality education and research is reflected in the number and variety of resources available to its students, faculty, and staff. These include one of the largest academic libraries in the United States; the world-famous Laboratory of Ornithology; the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art; and the laboratories, equipment, and computing power necessary for in-depth exploration of structures ranging in size from entire galaxies down to nanoscale dimensions. Cornell's faculty, numbering more than 2,600 worldwide, includes Nobel laureates, Pulitzer prize winners, and presidents of the leading professional organizations in their fields. There is a vibrant cultural life on campus, with seasonal offerings of theater, music, film, art exhibits, and dance. As New York State's land-grant institution—and the only Ivy League university with land-grant status—Cornell seeks to instill an interest in public service and community involvement in its students, encouraging them to use their skills and knowledge to benefit others.

Cornell's main campus is frequently described as one of the most beautiful in the United States. Spread over 745 acres of gardens, fields, and woods crisscrossed by gorges, waterfalls, and creeks, it includes more than 260 buildings ranging in age from mid-Victorian to early twenty-first century and offers spectacular views of Cayuga Lake and the surrounding countryside.

The Board of Trustees

Cornell's primary governing body is the Board of Trustees, which consists of 64 voting members and includes representatives elected by university staff, students, faculty, and alumni. There are also four ex-officio members: the president of the university, the governor of the state of New York, the speaker of the state assembly, and the president of the state senate. All of the aforementioned have full voting privileges.

The Board's responsibilities include adopting an annual plan of financial operation, degrees to be awarded, and electing a president, to whom trustees delegate day-to-day responsibility for administration of the university.

Undergraduate colleges at Cornell

- The New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- The College of Architecture, Art, and Planning
- The College of Arts and Sciences
- The College of Engineering
- The School of Hotel Administration
- The New York State College of Human Ecology
- The New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations

Graduate and professional schools at Cornell

- The Graduate School
- The Law School
- The Johnson Graduate School of Management
- Weill Cornell Medical College (located in New York City and Doha, Qatar)
- The Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences (located in New York City)
- The New York State College of Veterinary Medicine