

July 1, 2002

To: Academic Deans  
Social Science Advisory Council  
Chairs of Social Sciences Departments

We are pleased to announce a series of initiatives in the social sciences. They are based directly on the work of a faculty committee, the Social Sciences Advisory Council, and draw as well on recommendations from other faculty groups reviewing the social sciences in recent years.

First, we plan to establish an Academy for the Social Sciences. The Academy would be modeled in part on two other Cornell institutions, one long established – the Society for the Humanities – and the other of recent vintage – the Cornell University Social Sciences seminar. Each year the Academy would bring together roughly a dozen faculty, most if not all from Cornell, who would receive release time and/or research support to work on a common theme. Other social science initiatives – perhaps including but not limited to Decision Research and Poverty, Inequality and Development – would be linked, formally or informally, to the Academy. We intend to work toward the establishment of the Academy over the next three years. We will use next year for planning. We anticipate continuation of the Social Sciences seminar in 2003-04 and 2004-05, after a hiatus in 2002-03. Beginning in 2005-06, we expect to have the Academy fully in operation, in existing or new campus space, and with a director and staff support.

Second, we will provide funding beginning in 2002-03 to enhance recruiting of distinguished social scientists on existing lines. The goal is to raise substantially the quality of the social sciences faculty. The purpose of this initiative is to make stronger offers at any given rank or to convert a junior into a senior line. This money will consist of five-year bridging funds and will be available to any department or combination of departments in the University. In allocation of funds, preference will go to hiring of faculty from underrepresented minority groups, faculty working in interdisciplinary areas, and faculty specializing in ethnic studies. Decisions on where to expend funds will be modeled on the genomics initiative, with substantial representation from outside the department on the hiring committee and approval of candidates by a broader group.

Finally, we will provide funding for two new lines each in the Departments of Government and Economics. The allocation will be for five years, as above, but with the possibility of a permanent appropriation, contingent on the proposals submitted by the departments and the college for achieving the goal of significantly improving the faculty and the departments' research profile. The conditions and criteria will be the same as for the enhanced lines. Given the critical need to build strength in these areas, the College of Arts and Sciences will reallocate one or more lines to either or both of these departments to support this initiative.

The cost of these projects will gradually increase. We estimate that what we have committed to, when fully up and running, will require, in addition to space needs, over \$1.5 million annually, divided about equally among the three initiatives, in 2002 dollars. We anticipate a combination of fund raising and allocation of unrestricted funds to endow professorships and provide additional funds over the next five years.

Please bring these initiatives to the attention of faculty colleagues in your college or department. It is our hope that these new resources will significantly enhance the quality of the social sciences at Cornell.

Yours sincerely,

Hunter R. Rawlings III  
President

Carolyn A. Martin  
Provost