

CORNELL UNIVERSITY AT ITS SESQUICENTENNIAL

A Strategic Plan for Excellence 2010-2015

DRAFT OUTLINE

[January 25, 2010]

This outline is a “working document” being made available to the University community by Provost Kent Fuchs for comments and suggestions. This outline was prepared by the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (chaired by Professor Ed Lawler) with the assistance of four Working Groups (<http://www.cornell.edu/reimagining/plan.cfm>). Please send your comments and suggestions to [strategicplanning2010@cornell.edu] by February 22. This document will go through multiple revisions. Future iterations (outlines and a full draft) will be distributed during the Spring semester, and the plan will be finalized in May 2010. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

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Section I

PREAMBLE

A. Why Develop a University-wide Strategic Plan?

Context (changing environment)
Need (for longer term view)

B. Structure and Process

Strategic Planning Advisory Council
Working Groups
Approach to Task

C. Core (Driving) Question:

How can Cornell University preserve and enhance academic excellence in the context of limited resources?

Section II

THE INSTITUTION AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

A. Cornell's Distinctiveness: History and Culture

Ezra Cornell's Vision
Cornell as the First American University

B. Importance of Higher Education Today

C. Challenges Facing Higher Education

D. Cornell's Changing Environment and Unique Challenges

E. Cornell's Strengths and Opportunities

F. Strategic Issues and Directions

Strategic Responses to Cornell's challenges raise fundamental issues and must take account of Cornell's enduring commitments (next section).

Section III

CORNELL'S ENDURING COMMITMENTS

A. Introduction

Academic Excellence
Freedom with Responsibility
Diversity

B. Core Values (Draft)

Past to Present:

“Any person ...Any Study”
President Skorton’s Four Pillars

Core Values:

Pursuit of knowledge
Support free and open intellectual inquiry and expression
Sustain excellence in education, research, and outreach
Use knowledge to enlighten ourselves and affect the world
Reward and recognize merit, creativity, and innovation
Treat all individuals with dignity, respect, and fairness
Embrace difference and diversity
Be a collaborative, collegial community
Be accessible and affordable to all who meet high academic standards

C. University Mission (from 2008 strategic plan)

Cornell is a private, Ivy League university and the land-grant university for New York State. Cornell’s mission is to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge; produce creative work; and promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community. Cornell also aims, through public service, to enhance the lives and livelihoods of our students, the people of New York, and others around the world.

D. Vision (from 2008 strategic plan)

Cornell aspires to be the exemplary comprehensive research university for the 21st century on the basis of our distinctive status as a private university with a formal public mission. Faculty, staff, and students will thrive at Cornell because of its unparalleled combination of quality and breadth; its high standards; its open, collaborative, and innovative culture; the opportunities provided by beautiful, vibrant rural and urban campuses; and programs that extend throughout the state of New York and across the globe.

E. Aspiration

Strive to become a top-ten research university in the nation and world within the next ten years.

F. Overarching University Goals (Draft)

- a) Enroll, educate, and graduate the most deserving, promising, and diverse student body possible. Provide all students (undergraduate, graduate, professional) with an education that is innovative, distinctive, and of the highest quality.
- b) Maintain and enhance world leadership in research, scholarship, and creativity.
- c) Maintain and enhance efforts to recruit, nurture, and retain a diverse faculty who are outstanding scholars and teachers and an excellent, diverse staff that provide outstanding support to faculty and students.
- d) Strengthen the public engagement of the University's education, research, and clinical programs with local, state, national, and international communities, consonant with its stature as an elite private university with a public mission.
- e) Establish and maintain organizational structures and processes that promote and support academic excellence.

Section IV

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Overview

List of Objectives for Each Overarching Goal

PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

1. Provide a more unified and shared educational experience for Cornell undergraduates.
2. Create and sustain a culture that supports effective teaching in all academic units.
3. Strengthen institutional structures that promote pedagogical innovations both centrally and within colleges and programs.
4. Strengthen the educational impact of international opportunities and experiences for students.
5. Strengthen efforts to attract and educate an excellent and diverse body of undergraduate students.
6. Strengthen the capacity of graduate and professional programs to recruit and educate the very best students.

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVITY

1. Increase the number of Cornell departments or fields that have achieved world leadership in their areas.
2. Develop and implement institutional plans for building and maintaining world leadership in a select set of departments within the following broad areas -- Humanities and the Arts; Life Sciences; Physical Sciences and Engineering; Social Sciences; and among Cornell's Professional Schools and Programs.
3. While ensuring excellence in disciplines as a foundation, strengthen support for and recognition of emerging interdisciplinary areas.
4. Significantly improve institution-wide services for the administration and support of research grants.
5. Maintain and selectively strengthen in cost-effective ways the core infrastructures for research, scholarship, and creativity, including in particular libraries and shared research facilities.
6. Encourage productive, mutually-beneficial collaborations between faculty and students in Ithaca-based programs, and faculty and students at Weill Cornell Medical College and Graduate School.

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

1. Construct a unified concept and coherent organizational model for the University's outreach and public engagement mission.
2. Strongly connect extension and outreach to on-campus research and educational strengths.
3. Develop rigorous, systematic evaluations of all outreach and extension programs.
4. Promote stronger collaborations and partnerships between the University and stakeholders that can make use of and strengthen Cornell's research (e.g., industry, K-12 schools, nonprofit organizations, government).
5. Make public engagement a distinctive feature of education at Cornell.

PROMOTING FACULTY EXCELLENCE

1. Continue robust faculty recruitment in order to maintain or even increase faculty size in select areas.
2. Increase the diversity of faculty at a rapid rate.
3. Ensure competitive faculty compensation.
4. Devise new mechanisms or policies for rewarding outstanding faculty and for continually assessing faculty performance.
5. Foster an exciting intellectual environment through more dialogue and engagement.

PROMOTING STAFF EXCELLENCE

1. Retain highly qualified staff in valued positions as the University reorganizes to address budgetary constraints.
2. Attract a talented and diverse workforce to Cornell for new positions as they become available.
3. Require all supervisors to be trained in basic supervisory skills and to refresh those skills on a regular basis.
4. Provide job skill training to staff in a variety of venues.
5. Create a more flexible and adaptable workplace and workforce.
6. Work with the local community to ensure that Ithaca and Tompkins County remain vibrant places to live and work.

PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

[Draft]

Objective 1: Provide a more unified and shared educational experience for Cornell undergraduates

[Rationale: Cornell is the most educationally-diverse research university among its peers. The intent behind this objective is to encourage students to take better advantage of that educational diversity by adding convergent or common intellectual experiences early in their time at Cornell. For example, these could involve additional living/learning programs in residence halls, common courses for Cornell students, or courses in colleges around a common theme. The idea is to promote a more shared educational experience at the University, while recognizing and building on the distinctiveness of college-based educational programs.]

Actions:

- a. Define a set of institution-wide core competencies to guide teaching and programming.
- b. Create a series of common intellectual experiences within the first two years directed at core competencies, including living/learning programs and formal coursework.
- c. Have colleges re-assess their programs and make appropriate revisions in their courses and course requirements to realize institutional core competencies in ways that are suitable for particular colleges, disciplines, or interdisciplinary fields.
- d. Encourage students to cross college and program boundaries in pursuit of their educational goals, and significantly reduce the difficulties (posed by transfer pricing policies and college constraints) to facilitate this.

Objective 2: Create and sustain a culture that supports effective teaching in all academic units.

[Rationale: Cornell, like most top-tier research universities, has a strong culture in support of research and scholarship. It needs to maintain an equally strong culture in support of outstanding teaching. Effective teaching is a central responsibility of departments and programs, and a key component of each individual faculty member's professional activity. This means, for example, that faculty members should remain actively involved in teaching across their careers, recognizing that loads may vary due to other responsibilities or research support; the institution needs to ensure the best scholars are in the classroom because this has an important impact on students' education and represents a good model for junior faculty. Moreover, "signals" from top to bottom of the institution need to consistently convey the value of effective teaching.]

Actions:

- a. Ensure that all academic units have a robust form of assessment that generates full information, includes some type of student feedback and peer assessment, and provides feedback to teachers that enables them to continually improve their teaching.
- b. Significantly strengthen Cornell's resources for instructional support both centrally (e.g., the Center for Teaching Excellence) and in colleges so that faculty have easy access to new pedagogies and "best practices" for being effective teachers.
- c. Develop improved ways to recognize and celebrate pedagogical innovation and strong teachers who are responsive to students and rigorous in their approach to teaching.
- d. Ensure that academic leaders (chairs, deans, and the provost) communicate clear expectations about the importance of teaching and hold programs and individual faculty responsible for demonstrating teaching effectiveness (e.g., in resource allocations and salary decisions).
- e. Examine current policies on course reductions and "buy outs" of teaching and assess whether alternative forms of relief (e.g., from administrative and committee responsibilities) or monetary rewards (e.g., summer salary, research monies) can effectively substitute for course reductions.
- f. Ensure that senior faculty members with teaching appointments remain actively involved in and committed to teaching over their careers at Cornell.

Objective 3: Strengthen institutional structures that promote pedagogical innovations both centrally and within colleges and programs.

[Rationale: Faculty have many reasons not to devote more time to enhance the innovativeness of their teaching, adopt new pedagogies, or experiment with new methods, given the opportunity costs of such time investments (e.g., time from research and other professional activities). There is a national market for excellent research, but no comparable market for excellent teaching, which makes the local institutional policies, practices and priorities of particular importance for teaching.]

Actions:

- a. Strengthen the capacity (administrative and budgetary) of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education to facilitate and support educational innovations.
- b. Encourage faculty to experiment with new pedagogies (e.g. field-based learning) and new technologies, recognizing the different pedagogies appropriate for different disciplines and programs.

- c. Establish funds to provide summer salary or other forms of support to faculty with creative proposals for new courses that meet important educational needs of students and that cross intellectual boundaries.
- d. Encourage more courses that involve team teaching across colleges or disciplines within them by being more flexible about faculty teaching credits.
- e. Promote and support educational innovations beyond the classroom (e.g., service learning), taking advantage of Cornell's living learning environment on campus and its public engagement mission and related programs.

Objective 4: Strengthen the educational impact of international opportunities and experiences for students.

[Rationale: International education and experiences could be a distinguishing feature of a Cornell education, especially when combined with field-based (service) learning and other ways that Cornell students can and do "engage the world." Cultural awareness and sensitivity can be construed as an important "core competency" that international programs and experiences help to develop. However, we do need to be clear about what we want students to gain from these experiences.]

Actions:

- a. Evaluate tuition, financial aid, and administrative structures for study abroad programs (external and Cornell-based) to ensure that they are affordable and sustainable and also of high quality.
- b. Expand non-credit opportunities, such as international internships, global service learning, and summer work experiences, with an important educational component.
- c. Assess what are the appropriate proportions of international students in programs, considering the quality of the applicant pools, the educational value of having students from diverse international and cultural backgrounds interact with Cornell students, and the costs of attracting the very best of these international students.
- d. Ensure that faculty participation and involvement in international programs (including study abroad) is sufficient to promote and sustain high quality educational experiences for students.
- e. Create inter-university collaborations with top-tier Universities abroad in order to foster two-way flows of students, while being selective about the number of such programs.

Objective 5: Strengthen efforts to attract and educate an excellent and diverse body of undergraduate students.

[Rationale: Attracting an excellent and diverse student body is a critical aspect of being a top University, and competition for students is growing. Having a diverse student body is integral to Cornell's core value of embracing "difference and diversity." Diversity generates important educational benefits because it brings students in contact with those different from themselves and gives them the experience of living in and learning from a diverse and collaborative community. This is particularly important in a global, multicultural society and world. Excellent, highly-ranked departments and faculty are crucial to attracting students, as are competitive award packages. Below are several ways that Cornell can do a better job of highlighting certain University strengths to attract the most promising and diverse student body possible – especially by emphasizing the breadth and comprehensiveness of its programs and the opportunities for working closely with outstanding faculty. The implication is that in recruiting undergraduate students, the University needs to more effectively or consistently bring to the foreground the personal attention from faculty and research opportunities students have at Cornell.]

Actions:

- a. Maintain need-blind admissions and the competitiveness of financial packages for undergraduate students.
- b. In order to significantly increase the proportion of under-represented minorities and also students from other cultures, develop targets and plans for enhancing diversity, as well as mechanisms for supporting and promoting the academic success and retention of minorities at Cornell.
- c. Redesign the University web site to highlight the special opportunities that students have at Cornell to work closely with faculty and the wide variety of courses and programs available to Cornell students.
- d. In recruiting students, emphasize the capacity of Cornell to provide students opportunities for undergraduate research (e.g., Presidential Research Scholars), study abroad, civic engagement, field-based learning, advising and mentoring by faculty, and the advantages of its living-learning environment.
- e. Develop effective ways to more heavily involve faculty in recruitment, admissions, and advising in order to increase yield among the top tier of admitted students.
- f. Support strong efforts to build pipelines (e.g., through charter schools and nonprofits) that significantly increase success in the recruiting of minority students.
- g. Explore whether some of Cornell's named scholarships could be used to more effectively enhance the yield among the very best applicants to Cornell.

Objective 6: Strengthen the capacity of graduate and professional programs to recruit and educate the very best students.

[*Rationale:* The quality of graduate students is critical to the stature of departments and programs and to the recruitment and retention of faculty. Enhancing diversity is critical to building a strong pipeline of candidates into the academic fields.]

Actions:

- a. Maintain competitive stipends and health benefits for graduate students.
- b. Make fellowships more widely available to entering Ph.D. students, especially in disciplines or fields that are high in quality, important to the University, and where this is essential to maintain competitiveness.
- c. Examine the feasibility and trade-offs of reducing graduate tuition rates to the levels of peer institutions.
- d. Develop a stronger, more organized web presentation on graduate education at Cornell that highlights Cornell's research infrastructure, its distinguished faculty, and the opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary work.
- e. To significantly increase the proportion of underrepresented minorities in graduate programs over the next five years, establish targets for diversity and develop plans for achieving them in graduate fields and professions where women and minorities are under-represented.
- f. Consolidate graduate fields or re-organize small fields into clusters if and when such reorganizations have a strong academic justification, create a "critical mass" of graduate students, and enhance the research of Ph.D. students.
- g. Create effective mechanisms at the institutional level for supporting the development of graduate students as teachers.
- h. Expand professional masters programs where market-based opportunities dovetail with the academic strengths of a Cornell program, taking account of any adverse effects on current programs of high quality.
- i. Develop regular mechanisms at the institutional level for assessing the quality and impact of professional masters programs.

[NOTE: See Objective 5 under public engagement.]

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVITY

[Draft]

Objective 1: Increase the number of Cornell departments or fields that have achieved world leadership in their areas.

[Rationale: In the short term, this is imperative to preserve academic excellence, even in a period of limited resources. For the longer term, a distinguished institution of higher education must achieve leadership in a significant number of departments, disciplines, or fields. In 1995 National Research Council (NRC) rankings, 19 of Cornell's graduate fields were ranked in the top ten (in the U.S.), and currently four of Cornell's professional schools or programs are ranked first or second in their respective fields. A set of well-understood and transparent criteria are needed for future assessments.

Actions:

- a. Place 25 fields in the top ten among U.S. peers using criteria, such as those specified by the National Research Council (NRC), and maintain the current high ranking and stature of each professional school.
- b. Identify and reward departments that become or already are world leaders in their disciplines or fields.
- c. Develop better data, criteria, and procedures for evaluating and tracking the quality of research, scholarship, and creativity of faculty, departments, and colleges.
- d. Require departments to develop strategic plans for enhancing or achieving academic distinction and leadership.
- e. Selectively invest in departments that demonstrate the greatest capacity to build on current strengths and achieve new intellectual heights.

Objective 2: Develop and implement institutional plans for building and maintaining world leadership in a select set of departments within the following broad areas -- Humanities and the Arts; Life Sciences; Physical Sciences and Engineering; Social Sciences; and among Cornell's Professional Schools and Programs.

[Rationale: Cornell must achieve and maintain academic distinction in a reasonable representation of departments within these broad areas, given the breadth and comprehensiveness of its mission. This implies that it is important to set priorities among departments and programs within these groupings. It is also critical to promote greater coordination and collaboration that enhances opportunities for departments to improve their stature. Cornell's history of academic distinction in several professional schools, that interweave the pursuit of fundamental knowledge

with its use and impact on the world, also should be enhanced and nurtured. While it may not be feasible for every department to reach the pinnacle in its field, each should have aspirations that are ambitious yet realistic.]

Actions:

- a. In order to advise on and promote new academic initiatives, use current internal advisory groups for the life sciences and social sciences and establish internal faculty advisory groups for humanities and the arts and for physical sciences and engineering, drawing on the diversity that exists in these groups of faculty.
- b. Develop and regularly revisit plans for improving cross-college and cross-department education and research ties or connections within these academic groupings.
- c. Consider more formal cross-college structures of coordination (e.g., steering committees, shared departments, super-departments, mergers) in disciplines or fields where these would significantly enhance academic excellence and reputation.
- d. Encourage efforts of professional programs and schools to enhance academic quality and generate ties of mutual benefit to basic disciplines.
- e. Eliminate or downsize academic departments or programs of weak quality unless they are highly important to the University and have the prospect of becoming strong in a reasonable period of time.
- f. Promote and support new initiatives that develop “cutting-edge” research and scholarship synergies across these academic groupings (e.g., life sciences and physical sciences; humanities and social sciences; professional programs and basic disciplines).

Objective 3: While ensuring excellence in disciplines as a foundation, strengthen support for and recognition of emerging interdisciplinary areas.

[*Rationale:* Interdisciplinary research, grounded in strong disciplines, is an historic strength of Cornell. This is important to remaining in the forefront of scholarship and research, contributing to solutions for societal challenges (e.g., poverty, environment), and also a way to enhance or leverage the distinctiveness of Cornell. It is important to stress that strong disciplines are a necessary condition for strong interdisciplinary efforts or programs.]

Actions:

- a. Encourage disciplinary departments to (a) recruit faculty likely to have an impact beyond the hiring unit, and (b) include faculty from more than one discipline or college on faculty search committees.
- b. Ensure that there is support and encouragement for junior faculty whose scholarly work extends beyond traditional department structures, including clear

expectations that their interdisciplinary or cross-departmental research will be fairly evaluated in renewal, tenure, and promotion decisions.

- c. Promote “grassroots” development of new interdisciplinary initiatives by improving the capacity of colleges and the Provost’s Office to identify, set priorities among, and nurture interdisciplinary efforts emerging from the faculty.
- d. Establish more effective procedures for encouraging and supporting the preparation of interdisciplinary proposals for external grants, traineeships, or contracts with a broad impact across department and colleges.
- e. Regularly assess interdisciplinary programs, supported by University funds, to ensure that they continue to involve faculty from multiple academic units and are magnets for excellence.
- f. Examine whether existing seed funds across campus are effectively being used to stimulate major new interdisciplinary initiatives.

Objective 4: Significantly improve institution-wide services for the administration and support of research grants.

[Rationale: The University needs to minimize administrative burdens on researchers and work to better facilitate their capacity to compete for research funding. Such investments could be paid back quickly by increasing grant support across the University. University-wide efforts and practices should foster and sustain a culture of proactive, solution-oriented, collaborative, customer-focused administrative services where actively consulting and partnering with researchers is the norm.]

Actions:

- a. Identify administrative barriers to successful competition for funding and the conduct of research and implement solutions to minimize or eliminate these barriers.
- b. Develop and successfully implement financial accounting and research administration systems in a manner that identifies and meets the needs of all stakeholders: administrators, faculty, and support staff both in units as well as centrally.
- c. Keep abreast of external regulatory trends (and proposed changes) and ensure that the regulatory requirements are adequately, but not over-zealously, met.
- d. Develop and maintain efficient staffing structures for research administration across campus in order to handle the administrative aspects of the research process as much as possible, e.g., for proposal development, financial management, contract management, protocol administration, data stewardship, and hiring.

- e. Establish clear expectations, qualifications, and competencies for research administrators and train or hire highly qualified individuals to serve in these roles in all colleges.
- f. In support of excellence in research, review performance within research administration in relation to established performance standards, customer satisfaction, and assessment by researchers and college research officers.
- g. Effectively participate in advocacy directed at funding agencies in support of the needs of higher education, principles of academic freedom, and capacities to conduct fundamental research.

Objective 5: Maintain and selectively strengthen in cost-effective ways the core infrastructures for research, scholarship, and creativity, including in particular libraries and shared research facilities.

[*Rationale:* The financial challenges of the institution are exerting significant pressures on these resources, which are essential to the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty and to Cornell’s academic reputation. The libraries are a well-recognized strength of the University and Cornell has exercised national and international leadership in the development of “state of the art” shared research facilities.]

Objective 5A. *University Library*

[*Rationale:* The Library is foundational to excellence in virtually all departments and programs. It is the “core facility” for humanists, who in particular need access to books and monographs; natural and social scientists need access in particular to digital resources, open source journals, and the like. However, recent cuts to the budget for library acquisitions and burgeoning publication costs have threatened the competitive standing of Cornell’s library, and this could hamper attempts to recruit outstanding faculty, especially in the humanities. Strengthening the collections and ensuring that they are at a competitive level should be a high priority.]

Actions:

- i. Assess how the University Libraries are supporting the research and scholarship of faculty.
- ii. Develop deeper engagement between faculty and librarians across campus in order to identify priorities for collection building; to enhance support for new, under-supported, or interdisciplinary fields; and to respond to emerging needs in areas such as data curation, visual resources, and digital culture.
- iii. Ensure that collaborations and partnerships with other libraries serve the needs of faculty and students at Cornell and strengthen faculty scholarship and productivity.

- iv. Examine the library needs of graduate and professional students and build stronger services and programs to support their work.

Objective 5B. *Shared Research Facilities*

[*Rationale:* Cornell should strive to remain a leader in the development and provision of core research facilities for local, national, and international science communities. It can only do so by engaging in actions such as the following.

Actions:

- i. Maintain and promote core shared facilities in the sciences and social sciences, taking account of the research needs of local, national, and international scientific communities, external-funding opportunities, and cost-efficiency.
- ii. Review the University's investments in shared research on a regular basis to ensure that these facilities maximize impact on the productivity and reputation of the University in national and international domains.
- iii. In using central resources to support shared research facilities, priority should be given to matching funds for external funding that strengthens existing shared facilities, impacts multiple research groups on and off campus, leverages Cornell's investment, and enhances its academic stature.

Objective 6: Encourage productive, mutually-beneficial collaborations between faculty and students in Ithaca-based programs, and faculty and students at Weill Cornell Medical College and Graduate School.

[*Rationale:* The geographical separation of the University's main campus and the medical school creates special challenges and makes it difficult to take full advantage of potential synergies in research, teaching, and clinical programs. Some challenges are historical and cultural, and others are administrative. Historically, Cornell's Ithaca-based campus and medical school have had few academic ties across related disciplines or fields, and administratively, there are unique and special obstacles to collaboration. This is changing, in part because of new capabilities in electronic communication and intercampus transportation, and in part because of increasing potential for cross-fertilization between basic and applied biological sciences (e.g., importance of "translational research") and between engineering and medical fields. Recent examples of growing collaborations include joint retreats, collaborative seed grants in biomedical science, and dual faculty appointments. Such collaborations can generate "value added" results in research and strengthen the University's competitive position in the recruitment and retention of faculty. It is important to continue and to nurture this momentum over the next five years. The actions below exemplify some of the important steps to enable fruitful collaborations to emerge among the faculty.]

Actions:

- a. Develop mechanisms that allow graduate students to engage in research and coursework on both campuses through programs that address issues such as academic requirements, student housing, and health insurance.
- b. Identify areas of common and complementary interest between the life sciences and other academic disciplines, and nurture these by encouraging joint retreats or joint seminars among interested faculty in both locations.
- c. Assess what are the main administrative barriers to collaboration by faculty and students and work to resolve those.
- d. Explore additional joint recruitment efforts and joint appointments that would be of mutual advantage to Cornell's Ithaca-based and Weill Cornell programs.

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

[Draft]

Objective 1: Construct a unified concept and coherent organizational model for the University's outreach and public engagement mission.

[Rationale: "Public engagement" refers to the full panoply of ways that Cornell's faculty, staff, and students make meaningful contributions to societal challenges and problems (e.g. environment, health, poverty). However, the educational and research activities of the University's outreach efforts are highly fragmented and scattered. Public engagement includes formal extension programs; translational research; clinical programs; technology transfer; education programs such as service learning; international engagements, and faculty involvement in public policy or as public intellectuals. Greater connectivity among many of these disparate programs and activities is needed, but without introducing new central administrative structures or unacceptable constraints on academic entrepreneurialism. The administration of public engagement should be lean in order to enable a "bottom up" entrepreneurial spirit to blossom.]

Actions:

- a. Embrace a broad and inclusive definition of the "land grant" mission of the University that is directed at national and international communities, as well as local and state communities.
- b. Recognize and highlight the public engagement efforts of faculty across endowed, contract, and medical colleges.
- c. Develop an integrated and more "user friendly" web portal for delivery of public engagement programs and activities, including extension.
- d. Make better use of electronic and other media to foster greater public recognition and appreciation of Cornell's public engagement accomplishments.
- e. Develop university-wide mechanisms to promote interconnections across forms or types of public engagement (e.g., extension, technology transfer, translational research, clinical, international programs, and service learning) without introducing new central structures.
- f. Re-assess the county-based organizational structures for extension activities and determine whether this model is appropriate for the future.

Objective 2: Strongly connect extension and outreach to on-campus research and educational strengths.

[Rationale: The strengths of the outreach mission derive from the research and educational strengths of the University and the capacity of the institution and its

faculty to build and sustain enduring collaborations with stakeholders. Emphasizing the ties to on-campus research and education is a way to set some boundaries for outreach, enhance its quality, and bring more focus and coherence to the University's public engagement programs.]

Actions:

- a. Emphasize evidence- or scientifically-based extension and outreach that meets the educational or informational needs of stakeholders (ranging from local communities to New York State to international arenas).
- b. Make research an overarching theme for interconnecting community-based extension programs with on-campus research as well as with basic and applied science in the life sciences, engineering, and medicine.
- c. Invest in and build on outreach programs with strong, mutually-beneficial ties to research and educational programs on campus, while reducing focus and resources directed at programs without such ties.
- d. Develop more strategic partnerships between on-campus education programs and community-based extension and outreach.

Objective 3: Develop rigorous, systematic evaluations of all outreach and extension programs.

[Rationale: A more institution-wide approach and common set of criteria would be helpful as would ongoing methods of gathering information on quality and impact.]

Actions:

- a. Develop explicit criteria for evaluating programs that emphasize quality, importance to the University, and impact on society.
- b. Include an "external review" component in regular evaluations of outreach programs.
- c. Establish an institutional mechanism for collecting data and information on the quality and impact of extension and outreach programs and for conducting evaluations.

Objective 4: Promote stronger collaborations and partnerships between the University and stakeholders that can make use of Cornell's research (e.g., industry, local schools, nonprofit organizations, government).

[Rationale: Partnerships with stakeholders are an important way for the University to identify policy-related problems and to effectively bring the research expertise of faculty to bear on them. Strong outreach and extension programs tend to require productive two-way interactions between researchers and stakeholders.]

Actions:

- a. Improve University mechanisms for making technologies and knowledge that can be defined as public goods, readily available to those who can benefit from them.
- b. Encourage the development (e.g., in licensing agreements) of on-going relationships between Cornell researchers and those who use Cornell research innovations for commercial purposes.
- c. Promote and support collaborations between faculty and local schools that contribute to the quality of K-12 education in New York State.
- d. Explore new partnerships with state, regional, and national industries in order to promote economic development.
- e. Build a stronger footprint or base for Cornell's education, research, and outreach programs in New York City.

Objective 5: Make public engagement a distinctive feature of education at Cornell.

[*Rationale:* Cornell has a unique capacity to interweave public engagement with its educational and research programs for students, given its status and history as a private University with a Land Grant mission. The integration of fundamental science and application, of knowledge and its use for the public good should be a distinguishing feature of Cornell programs.]

Actions:

- a. Explore and assess whether or how “engaging the world” can become a more integral component of educational programs across campus.
- b. Strengthen the participation of faculty and faculty leadership in public engagement programs available to students.
- c. Ensure that it is easy and efficient for students to become aware of and access information about public engagement opportunities (e.g., service learning, internships) that serve their educational goals.
- d. Develop better institutional mechanisms for coordinating off-campus, non-classroom teaching and field-based or service learning opportunities for faculty and students.
- e. Evaluate the organizational structures through which Cornell makes available internships, educational work opportunities, and other off-campus learning to determine how they can be improved.

PROMOTING FACULTY EXCELLENCE

[Draft]

[*Overall rationale:* The need to renew the faculty ranks given anticipated retirements; keep abreast of and deal with intense competition; reduce losses of valued faculty; enhance diversity; and take full advantage of being in a small, isolated community.]

Objective 1: Continue robust faculty recruitment in order to maintain or even increase faculty size in select areas.

[*Rationale:* Many Cornell departments are already relatively small, compared to peer institutions, and it is critical to maintain or selectively enhance faculty size in distinguished departments and to have the capacity to invest faculty positions in areas of substantial potential and opportunity.]

Actions:

- a. Emphasize a faculty recruitment strategy of “building from the bottom” (recruiting new Ph.D.s and “rising stars”) over the next five years, recognizing that this may not be appropriate for all units or at all times within a given unit.
- b. In areas important to the University, where a significant percentage of high-quality faculty are nearing retirement, pre-fill during the next five years a significant proportion of expected faculty retirements across the next ten years.
- c. Develop and sustain “state-of-the-art” dual career efforts and support designed to offset the disadvantages of a small, geographically-isolated community.
- d. Develop regular, systematic, and transparent mechanisms for reallocating faculty positions across academic units.
- e. Increase funding for new faculty positions by making this a priority of fund raising.

Objective 2: Increase the diversity of faculty at a rapid rate.

[*Rationale:* Diversity is a high priority over the next five years, important in principle given core values of the institution and of significant educational value to students and programs. Having a more diverse faculty is also important because of the increasing diversity of the student body and larger society. The next five to ten years offer an unusual period of opportunity for Cornell to increase the diversity of its faculty, given prospective faculty retirements.]

Actions:

- a. Develop targets for gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of faculty in all units that take account of both the pool of available candidates and the importance of “critical mass” within units or fields.
- b. Expand the pools from which we recruit faculty by more broadly defining faculty positions, wherever possible.
- c. Ensure that colleges and departments give appropriate attention to diversity throughout the recruitment process, from when positions are defined to the development of short lists and interview lists, to the final decision stage.
- d. Make more proactive and expeditious efforts to reduce the departures of high-quality faculty who contribute to gender and race/ethnic diversity of the University community.
- e. Establish better funding mechanisms at the center of the University and in colleges to promote and encourage vigorous efforts to recruit, nurture, and retain a diverse faculty in terms of gender and race/ethnicity.

Objective 3: Ensure competitive faculty compensation.

[*Rationale:* The University has invested substantial resources over the last ten years to raise faculty salaries to a competitive level among its peers, and it cannot afford to lose ground on this dimension.]

Actions

- a. Keep faculty salaries at or above the median among peer institutions.
- b. Benchmark and regularly assess fringe benefits to ensure that these remain abreast of the competition.
- c. Assess and benchmark start up packages and ongoing support for research, defining a set of peer Universities for this purpose.

Objective 4: Devise new mechanisms or policies for rewarding outstanding faculty.

[*Rationale:* To retain and nurture outstanding faculty, all available means of recognition and reward are important, not only salary. Relatively modest measures may reap significant benefits. This also implies well-understood methods or metrics of assessing the quality of the research, teaching and public engagement, appropriate to a discipline or field.]

Actions:

- a. Develop a provost fund for providing special monetary rewards (bonuses, summer pay, seed funds for research) for exceptional academic accomplishments.

- b. Assess whether there is sufficient merit differentiation in salary decisions within colleges and departments to reward faculty who already are or are likely to become leaders in their disciplines or field.
- c. Develop a campus-wide effort to nominate candidates every year for national prizes and awards.
- d. Give special recognition to and publicize faculty who receive distinguished academic awards and honors from their peers.
- e. Develop institution-wide principles for colleges to develop post-tenure reviews of faculty to ensure that faculty teaching, research, and public engagement is rigorously evaluated, recognized, and rewarded.

Objective 5: Foster an exciting intellectual environment through more dialogue and engagement.

[*Rationale:* The academic/intellectual environment is critical to the attractiveness of Cornell and to the retention of faculty. A negative department culture is commonly mentioned in exit interviews, and, as one example of impact, it is a key factor in retaining women on the faculty.]

Actions:

- a. Devise new ways to foster constructive dialogue on important intellectual issues among faculty, students, and staff within and across academic units.
- b. Promote intellectually rewarding cross-department, cross-college, or interdisciplinary collaborations among faculty.
- c. Develop a revamped faculty club on campus and ensure that there are “conversation” spaces available in all areas of campus.
- d. Assist department chairs in their efforts to create and sustain a positive department culture in which faculty engage in constructive exchange on their scholarship and work together effectively as department or program colleagues.

[NOTE: See objective 6 under staff excellence.]

EXCELLENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

The development of this section is scheduled to follow other sections of the plan. Organizational stewardship refers to how the University ensures effective management and administration of resources in support of its academic mission. Topics include human resources, budget and finance, facilities infrastructure, and technology. A preliminary draft of the subsection on staff excellence is included below. Future iterations of the plan will incorporate draft outline material for all subsections of organizational stewardship for response and comment from the University community.

PROMOTING STAFF EXCELLENCE

[Preliminary Draft]

[*Overall rationale:* Staff excellence is a critical component in virtually all of the University's academic and nonacademic pursuits. Competition for staff is intense and growing in some areas. While staffing has grown in some areas, the recent period is marked by staff reductions through retirements, attrition, and some layoffs. This has resulted in heightened levels of uncertainty and increased job stress for the University's dedicated staff.]

Objective 1: Retain highly-qualified staff in valued positions as the university reorganizes to address budgetary constraints.

[*Rationale:* In light of constrained resources, the importance of retaining our best staff and ensuring a continuation of critical positions is greater than ever.]

Actions:

- a. Identify positions that will be needed, using administrative reviews seeking input at all levels of the organization to gain a complete picture of which positions are critical and which may be reasonably combined.
- b. Clearly define the expectations, skills, and talents needed to excel in these positions and accurately define positions (e.g., job descriptions, titles, classifications), to reflect expected outcomes, ensuring that sufficient authority is given commensurate with responsibilities involved.
- c. Identify career ladders and training opportunities to advance into positions that have advancement opportunities.
- d. Provide staff annual performance reviews that accurately and honestly assess performance in current positions and identify development plans for growth.
- e. Align annual and ongoing salary increase programs to performance.

Objective 2: Attract a talented and diverse workforce to Cornell for new positions as they become available.

[Rationale: Diversity is a fundamental value of the University that should be applied to staff as well as to faculty and students. There are select staffing categories where women or minorities are highly under-represented. Social networking opportunities can be particularly helpful here.]

Actions:

- a. Ensure that effective procedures are in place for reviewing positions, assessing short lists, and including diversity impact as a factor in hiring decisions.
- b. Create clear diversity search plan expectations, including the ability to stop searches that do not have diverse candidate pools.
- c. Develop explicit targets for gender, racial, and ethnic diversity for job categories in which these groups are under-represented, and develop diversity plans with those units.
- d. Create accurate position descriptions and career path models so that new hires understand the positions they will be taking and see career opportunities for the future.
- e. Have all new hires attend orientation and gather feedback and routinely assess the value of orientation.
- f. Assign all new hires a mentor/advisor for 90 days and ensure mentors understand what is expected of them.
- g. Ensure starting salaries are aligned with position responsibilities and are at or above typical academic and geographic area averages.

Objective 3: Require all supervisors to be trained in basic supervisory skills and to refresh those skills on a regular basis.

[Rationale: The ability of staff to develop and achieve their potential depends very heavily on the quality of the supervision and training of their supervisors.]

Actions:

- a. Require the Division of Human Resources to track all supervisors and to report their training to the leadership on an annual basis.
- b. Ensure the training is meaningful, relevant, and designed for specific supervisory levels. Have a mechanism to assess training and revise as needed.

Objective 4: Provide job-skill training to staff in a variety of venues

[Rationale: Providing staff the opportunity to advance their careers, develop their talents, and improve their lives is an important part of being a good employer. It is

also important to do this without creating frustration, such as when an employee trains for a higher-level position and then has nowhere to go.]

Actions:

- a. Increase the current job-skill offerings through the Division of Human Resources and track usage, reporting to the college/unit leadership on a regular basis.
- b. Make greater use of on-line short courses and training to develop needed skills and talents.
- c. Encourage staff to take advantage of the University “health and well-being” programs.
- d. Tie training to identified development plans (obtained in annual performance appraisals).

Objective 5: Create a more flexible and adaptable workplace and workforce.

[Rationale: This is essential to efficiently manage work and to ensure a healthier workforce. The diverse nature of the university means that different approaches and structures may be required in different units. A cookie-cutter approach is not appropriate. It is important to recognize that a motivated, healthier workforce is more productive and loses less time for illness and appointments.]

Actions:

- a. Reassess job design and work allocation processes in light of recent declines in the University workforce.
- b. Create more collaborative, team-oriented units or work settings in which staff explicitly share responsibility for outcomes, have complementary skills and the capacity (talents) to substitute for each other.
- c. Encourage supervisors to make arrangements for staff to be away from their work, if necessary, for purposes of professional development, e.g., consider how to encourage people to exercise during the day.
- d. Improve the current Exit Interview process and use data from them to develop HR plans for improvement.

Objective 6: Work with the local community to ensure that Ithaca and Tompkins County remain vibrant places to live and work.

[Rationale: This is important to the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students.]

Actions:

- a. Promote affordable housing and accessible transportation for members of the University community.

- b. Encourage faculty and staff to contribute time and effort to maintaining and strengthening the quality of local schools.
- c. Encourage “volunteerism” among the campus community on behalf of the local community. Develop a system that can better track how many hours that staff, faculty, and students volunteer in off-campus communities.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

[2010-2015]

[To be developed]

ASSESSING PROGRESS

[2010-2015]

[To be developed]

CONCLUSION: Cornell at its Sesquicentennial

[To be developed]