

Board of Trustees

The responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the university is vested in the Board of Trustees, which meets in regular session four times each year, normally three times in Ithaca and once in New York City. Much of its work is accomplished through its standing committees: the Executive Committee, the Investment Committee, the Finance Committee, the Committee on Alumni Affairs and Development, the Audit Committee, the Buildings and Properties Committee, the Committee on Board Membership, the Committee on Government Relations, the Committee on Academic Affairs, and the Committee on Student Life. Nontrustees may be invited to attend meetings on an *ad hoc* basis or to serve as non-voting “advisor” members of some of these committees.

Cornell was the first American institution of higher education to have faculty representatives on its Board of Trustees. This practice began in 1916, at the urging of Jacob Gould Schurman, then president of the university.

The structure of the Board of Trustees has changed several times. Currently, the board has sixty-four members: four *ex officio* members (the governor of the state, the president pro tem of the state senate, the speaker of the state assembly, and the president of the university); one life member (the eldest lineal descendent of Ezra Cornell); three members appointed by the governor; forty-three members-at-large, elected by the board, including two each from the fields of agriculture, business, and labor in New York State; eight members elected from and by the alumni of the university; two faculty members elected by the University Faculty; two students elected by the students of the university; and one nonacademic employee elected by the nonacademic employees of the university.

The Board of Trustees has defined the functions of its executive officers, committees, and of the faculties it has established. Basic board legislation is included in the bylaws of the university, which are subject to frequent amendments or additions adopted by the board, sometimes in response to a recommendation from the University Faculty. A copy of the latest edition of the university bylaws is available from the secretary of the corporation in the Office of the University Counsel or may be found on the Office of the Board of Trustees website at www.cornell.edu/trustees. Questions with regard to the proceedings of the Board of Trustees should be directed to the secretary of the corporation.