

As predicted, this year has been unprecedented in variety of ways, and faculty have added many unusual activities to our normal conduct of the business of the university. Most of what we do is teaching, research and outreach. However, in addition to these normal activities, we've contributed in a very major way to "Reimagining Cornell", to the strategic planning, to the reaccreditation process and we will be a major part of the review of the student experience at Cornell.

**Normal activities.**

*Teaching, Research, Outreach.* Most faculty at Cornell do what they love to do. We are dedicated academics – dedicated to our students, dedicated to our scholarship and dedicated to the university. Being a professor at Cornell University is a great life and in general we do not retire early. We are in the fortunate position to be paid to do what we love. Why would we retire? Some of us never retire, and we typically do not retire early. Nonetheless, eventually, some of us do retire, and the university recognized 33 retiring faculty at a reception in early May. Individuals in this retirement class ranged in age from their mid 60s to at least 80, and I'd guess the average age of the cohort who gathered was above 70.

We don't retire early because we love interacting with young people who have new and challenging ideas. We interact in the class room, in the lab, and during various discussions. In the fall term we taught 2,172 courses, representing 225,335 credit hours, and in the spring term we taught 2,300 courses, representing 212,568 credit hours.

We don't retire early because we love the life of investigation/scholarship. We publish the results of those investigations in books, paper journals, on-line journals, newspaper articles, and in whatever vehicle is available. Although it's difficult to obtain a totally accurate accounting, Cornell faculty published more than 7000 journal articles in 2009. Our scholarship is widely recognized outside the university, and in this academic year Cornell congratulated eight faculty who were elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, American Philosophical Society or the National Academy of Sciences. To accomplish this visible scholarship requires money and in FY2009, faculty in Ithaca expended >\$480,000,000, most of this expenditure being sponsored research. At three-quarters of the way through the year we had attracted about \$270,000,000 in new sponsored awards, with two very large awards not yet announced.

We don't retire early because much of what we do is important to society and we love to communicate the results of our findings to groups interested in what we do. Those groups may be congressmen and women wanting to learn about the implications of potential policy, persons looking for answers to diverse questions about the economy,

colleagues interested in the impact of a new super collider, or homeowners interested in diseases of their tomato plants.

*Faculty governance/university function.* There are 320 faculty serving on 26 faculty committees falling under the aegis of the University Faculty. Several committees have been particularly active this year – including the Educational Policy Committee, the Financial Policy Committee, the Library Board, and the University Faculty Committee (the executive committee of the University Faculty Senate). Other committees have intense schedules regularly; these include the Local Advisory Council (for advice on all types of issues), Institutional Review Board (required to enable research involving human subjects), the Faculty Advisory Committee on Tenured Appointments, and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (governing work with recombinant DNA). Service on these committees is required for the healthy functioning of the university. This service is contributed by faculty without special benefit to the contributor, but with the realization that such service is required if the university is to operate smoothly.

Members of the Board of Trustees have been meeting twice a year with the University Faculty committee – an action that is much appreciated by the Faculty and the Senate. This meeting is important to illustrate to both groups that each group is composed of human beings who want the best for the University.

The Educational Policy Committee has struggled with Academic Integrity during the entire year. This is an issue that continues to occupy the attention of faculty and students. We've been disappointed to learn that we are not terribly different from our peers in that we're all seeing too many cases of violations of the code of academic integrity. I was delighted that the Meinig scholars this year investigated academic integrity as their semester project. They've suggested some changes and these will be considered carefully by the faculty. A recently available web-based introduction to our code developed by the Academic Integrity Hearing Board chairs, provides a wonderful guide. However, our challenge (and that of our peers) is to create a culture in which cheating is not acceptable.

Additionally there are 105 faculty on the University Faculty Senate. The Senate meets monthly, and has been quite active this past year. Their resolutions this year have: a) urged faculty to be lenient to students (regarding exams, attendance and deadlines) during the H1N1 epidemic; b) urged the provost to release the various task force reports; c) endorsed the President's effort for the university to achieve climate neutrality by 2050; d) urged a moratorium (to enable further study) on leasing Cornell lands in the Marcellus Shale; e) urged faculty involvement concerning the future (closing) of any university libraries; f) endorsed the creation of a department of Information Science; g) created a faculty committee to consider the Cornell Child Care Center; h) expressed concern about academic integrity; i) encouraged greater interaction between faculty and their advisees; and j) urged explicit response from the administration concerning recommendations coming from faculty bodies.

## **Reimagining Cornell**

These past 18 months have been different from normal because of the major university effort to analyze our current position and to prepare the university for the future. Faculty have worked along side administrators and staff in this process. There were 14 academic task forces and 6 cross-college taskforces and more than 140 faculty devoted hours and hours of effort to this huge task

*Strategic planning.* As the Trustees are well aware, the university is using the Task Force reports to plan for the future. The strategic plan is being developed by the entire university, but is being led by the faculty. Seven faculty led by Ed Lawler are using input from many sources, but particularly the plan is informed by the reports of the various Task Forces, and also from four working groups of the strategic planning effort involving 29 additional faculty. (The working groups also included administrators and staff.) You've commented on the Strategic Plan and will see the current version during this May meeting.

*Reaccreditation.* Additionally there are 29 faculty members serving on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Reaccreditation project. This group has been working intensely for the past 15 months. They've been particularly intent on assuring consistency between the "Reimagining" effort and the Reaccreditation effort. The steering committee meets once or twice a month and the six working groups meet additionally. The working groups are producing voluminous reports from which the self study executive summary will be constructed.

## **Student Suicides:**

An editorial in the Sun [6 May ("Teach Your Students Well")] called faculty to action after the cluster of suicides in March. The editorial identified several actions that might help to alleviate stress on students. I was pleased to indicate to the community that several of the actions requested in the editorial were already in process.

As illustrated by the discussion at the Faculty Senate meeting in April, the faculty are very concerned about the suicides and are searching for approaches to eliminate such tragedies. The editorial correctly identified that some faculty did reach out to students in classes. I've heard from both faculty and students that such a communication was a very meaningful and helpful experience. However, not all faculty communicated to students in this way, and some students were disappointed. I also know that in recent weeks faculty in departments across the university have participated in a series of discussions with Counselors from Gannett. These discussions have typically extended well beyond the announced conclusion hour – because of the intense interest on the part of the faculty. Faculty are learning the symptoms of students in distress and are learning how to connect these students with help.

The editorial also suggested that advising needs to be reviewed. The discussion at the April Senate meeting articulated the same suggestion and a resolution concerning this topic was considered by the Senate on Wednesday (12 May). The resolution specifically

requested that we establish shared advising expectations and that we establish mechanisms “to support effective faculty advising including face to face meetings”.

Finally, the editorial suggested that we review the academic calendar. This review has been planned for some time and the committee to conduct this review was being constituted at the time the editorial appeared. I’ve heard from faculty, students, administrators and alumni who believe that our calendar is a problem.

The faculty are very concerned about students; we recognize that students are the reason that we are here. We are very interested in supporting students and in creating a very healthy climate for learning, for discovery/scholarship, and for personal growth. Cornell is a special place in which all members of the community are so vested in the university that we all assume responsibility for the institution. I suppose we all feel like investors. This makes an interesting challenge for administrators. Students certainly feel responsible for the university and are not shy in communicating to the administration; staff are vested in the success of the students and in the success of the faculty; and faculty believe they are chiefly responsible for the excellence of the university.