

March 24, 2017

Dear Colleague:

I am on the “shutdown” team that decides if we close the University because of weather. It makes sense to rethink the shutdown process given that we all have fresh memories from the recent storm. Please send me your ideas and observations via

snowdays@cornell.edu

Thanks!

Charlie Van Loan
Dean of Faculty

1. Faculty

Shutting down for two half days seemed irrational to me. It did not reduce the number of commutes that people had to make in bad weather, and it creates confusion about what is canceled. If a class starts in the morning and ends after noon, does it meet? This storm played out precisely as it was forecast 24 hours in advance of its start, so the timing of the shutdown, which seemed like an afterthought, was surprising.

2. Faculty

Personally speaking, I think that the decision to close the campus could have been made earlier, given how clear it was that this would be a major weather event. From what I heard, faculty with classes on the morning of March 14 did not have many students show up. and faculty like myself who had classes in the afternoon had already spent time preparing, only to have classes canceled. In my opinion, it would allow for more efficient use of time if the decision had been made the night before or by early morning on March 14.

3. Faculty

Thanks for asking for responses on snow day shut downs. The issue has multiple dimensions, of course. Most immediately, I was deluged with angry emails from students and faculty about the late decision to shut the campus mid-day. For the most part, the complaints were on behalf of staff (who remained stoically silent), since a high number of them live far from campus. To a large extent, the day-to-day running of the campus depends on staff, as much as students and faculty. If the assumption is that students and faculty, who largely live in walking distance or a short commute, can make it to campus, this says nothing about the inconvenience – and danger – for staff of driving perhaps from a county away in treacherous road conditions. With the governor's declaring a state emergency the previous evening, it seems the decision to close could have been made much earlier, with less potential for disaster.

On prelim make-ups, I canvassed my students about the disruptive storm and its effect on prelims, to a collective shrug. Some prelims were rescheduled, and that was that.

4. Faculty

I have to say that from my perspective it was rather appalling that it took so long for the University to close last Tuesday. It's not as though we didn't know exactly what was coming; it almost seemed like a matter of pride that Cornell wouldn't close. There are three specific problems that I see with this delayed decision:

The reason given for not closing is always that so many students live on campus. However, as a faculty in residence I also live on campus, and I can tell you that the level of snow maintenance is simply inadequate in general, to say nothing of when we're at the front end of a major storm. It's simply not safe to have people out and about when the sidewalks aren't maintained. And they can't possibly be maintained with steady snowfall for hours on end.

If faculty had known sooner that we were to close, we could have planned better to accommodate the missed class meeting(s) and prelims.

A large part of our staff can't afford to live in Ithaca or drive fancy Subarus. It was morally questionable, at best, to leave them with the decision of coming in on Tuesday morning or losing their vacation time (if they even had any). Many then had to drive home in bad weather when we finally did close. The governor had declared a state of emergency and requested that all non-essential state employees stay

home. I understand our staff are not state employees, but surely we might use the governor's actions as a yardstick.

5. Faculty

On Tuesdays, I teach a class at 11:40. Despite the pretty terrible state of the roads that morning, I had arrived at my office at 10am, only to learn at 11 that classes were being cancelled effective at noon. This brilliant decision reminds me of one of the stories of the fabled city of Chelem, where the construction of a new public bathhouse was being debated. Some of the townspeople wanted the wooden flooring to be planed, to prevent splinters; others objected that a smooth floor is too easy to slip on. The city fathers decided to plane the planks, but to put them planed side down.

6. Staff

I think managers should in no uncertain terms praise employees for making plans to work from home and encourage it. Most of us can manage our workload from a home office and a computer. Ambiguous statements of whether we'll be called in lead to poor decision making and dangerous situations.

7. Faculty

It didn't make sense to close starting noon when people already have come to work. That created a mess. I for one had to give a makeup prelim starting noon. Some students showed up and others saw the University shutdown announcement and didn't show up but they were not sure. I thought it was evident that the weather will continue to be bad starting the morning. Why did it take the University such a long time to make a decision?

8. Faculty

Making a decision early is better than deciding once the day has begun. My "roommate" and I shoveled out so she could go teach her 8:40 class only to have school canceled so she had to drive in bad weather both ways.

Classes were canceled as of noon – next time how about having the closing time coincide with the start time or end time of the day's classes?

Can we design at least a tentative plan for what to do if evening prelims are canceled so that affected faculty can start their alternate planning as early as possible?

9. Faculty

It seems the University takes a perverse pleasure in being the only school in central New York that doesn't close. The last storm event strikes me as a decision made with some kind of macho motivation that defied a cautionary logic evident to everyone else.

I am especially concerned that this represents a particular hardship on staff, many of whom live farther away and have that much more difficulty coming into work. Of course, they also don't have the benefit of a salary that ensures there is no payment or evaluative penalty if they don't show up.

I know we have some system for "essential employees" but perhaps we could create another or additional categories that would make it easier for Cornell to allow one set of employees the ability to stay home without

penalty during events that are generally judged to be major but fall short of the Sheriff closing roads - sort of a DefCon 1 event vs. DefCon 2 vs. DefCon 3.

I am especially concerned that we faculty can pretty much do as we please and get away with it, but staff do not have that luxury and should be accorded more respect and mercy on major weather occasions.

10. Faculty

I thought the closure was probably a good idea. Does not seem like it is worth risking life and limb to come in to work or class on a day when some of the roads were almost impassable. I live in Lansing and the roads on the morning of the second day of the storm were just as bad as the first day.

11. Staff

I missed the most recent closure while traveling to a warm place, so I'd suggest many more in future years. They sound jolly good!

12. Faculty

My first recommendation would be to cancel classes during the entire day not half a day, for classes with different sections that meet from 9am to 3pm it is very difficult to teach some sections and not others.

The second one would be that if classes have to be cancelled one day just announce it at midnight the previous day, and try not change the time when the classes resume because it confuses everyone, and we cannot penalize for the attendance those students that were absent because they live off campus.

13. Faculty

While for me personally it would be nice if the University were to close whenever the Ithaca schools close! But this is not realistic given that our target audience typically live on or close to campus. So I think the only viable criterion has to do with whether staff and faculty can get to work. So if the Sheriff closes roads to all but emergency travel then I'd suspend operations until that closure is over. Otherwise, keep going.

14. Faculty

I think that it is a bad idea for Cornell to close at noon in the middle of a snowstorm. It should either remain open or (preferably) not start classes at all on that day. This has happened several times in the last 25 years resulting (as it did in this case) with people either having to walk home because there is no bus service or else sleep overnight at Cornell. I am an atmospheric scientist so I know that when the National Weather Service issues a Winter Storm Warning (as they did in this case) they mean "no unnecessary travel". I realize that travel to teach a class is necessary and that teaching faculty are considered "essential personnel". In my case, I teach a class that starts at 11:40 AM on Tuesdays, so I was wondering last Tuesday morning what to do about my class. I was surprised that with the Warning and heavy snow already falling, especially east of here, Cornell did not close that morning. I shoveled my driveway, considered the unsafe road conditions, then e-mailed my students and canceled class. My other colleagues with classes that morning did the same thing. As soon as I canceled class, the University announced it was closing at noon, so I felt somewhat vindicated. However, the whole situation was unnecessarily worrisome. I did bring home enough work for two days, anticipating that it would be two-day storm (we were in a Warning for two days).

At the other end of the storm, I was surprised that Cornell opened in time for evening classes and exams on Wednesday. It did not affect me, but I wondered how safe it was to travel that evening. It seemed to me that Cornell should have remained closed until Thursday morning.

15. Staff

Here's my thoughts: I think if all the other local schools are closed, Cornell should close. Once Ithaca College and Ithaca City Schools and Dryden and TC3 ALL decide it's too dangerous to travel, Cornell should follow suit. Leaving in the middle of the day is considerably less ideal than just not coming in, because people had to get home in the increasingly bad conditions, and TCAT was overwhelmed with everyone trying to be on the same routes. I took the bus in to avoid driving, but not everyone has that option.

Particularly for staff who have long commutes, knowing about a snow day before it happens instead of coming in and then leaving a few hours early makes a HUGE difference. Because I took the bus in, I felt pretty safe, but I also live fairly close to campus now. I used to commute in from Brooktondale – a 45-minute drive, give or take – and I would NOT have wanted to attempt that trip with the weather we had.

16. Staff

The Text message should include the expected reopen time. I was working remotely on Tuesday (thanks to technology and a flexible work environment), I was so excited to get a snow day, I didn't read the e-mail.

17. Staff

I hope that in the future, the "shutdown team" makes a more timely decision to shutdown the University. This storm was forecasted to be a major system and making the decision to shutdown the campus at the worst time of a storm of this magnitude put many of the University members at risk. I made a decision to stay home but heard a story from a friend about how he watched one student slipping and sliding while trying to cross a sidewalk and meanwhile a TCAT bus approaching also losing control. The warnings about this system were provided well in advance and the authorities were urging people to take appropriate measures to handle a storm of this scale, so it was disappointing that Cornell closed the campus so late and then those that commuted to work were stuck in Ithaca and struggled to make it home safely.

18. Faculty

Hello, it is my understanding that there was now problem with the closing of campus during the last storm. The problem I've been hearing is that temp employees were paid straight time for working when campus is closed! I was always told that when your called in or campus is closed it's time and a half! I've been called in previous years to shovel the roof of Lyna rink when campus is closed and been paid time and a half, but not this time..

19. Faculty

In anticipation of the 12 PM opening, I was out and about on Wednesday and came in. Felt kind of silly to be here and have the university close just before that time. I also understood (never checked it) that the county closed the roads on Tuesday afternoon. That would have been worthy of sharing with folks who might have come in on Tuesday and felt they might as well stay the day.

20. Staff

Well, since you asked, it seems really incredibly daft that the university didn't figure out that it needed to close until noon on Tuesday. Every school district in the county had announced closure the night before. Most government offices were closed by morning. This was predicted to be the biggest storm since 1993 (i.e. the biggest storm in the entire lifetime of our current undergraduate population).

I'm lucky. I have a job that allows me to work from home when circumstances require it, so I just stayed home. A lot of other folks are not that lucky, and a lot of them have much longer commutes than I do (I drive in from Trumansburg). A lot of them have more difficult childcare challenges than I do (my youngest is fourteen and is fine to stay home on his own if need be).

I think Cornell would be much better off figuring out what the (very real) logistical challenges are during a closing (including things like keeping dining units open for on-campus students, critical lab coverage, and no doubt many things that I don't know about) and setting up solid structures to handle that. Perhaps even set up a separate pot of money to cover things like overtime pay and comp time, so nobody is trying to decide if Cornell can afford to close when employee safety is at risk.

Then, we could just close with appropriate promptness when it makes sense to do so.

21. Staff

As a Cornell staff member in X, I found it very hard to tell if I should continue working or not after the university closed. This was my first snow day while working at Cornell and it seems like there wasn't a lot of information given or an official "you no longer have to work" announcement. I am a developer so my work can be done regardless of where I am at. So when it was announced the university was closing I didn't know if that meant we were expected to continue working to whatever extent we can while off campus.

I think what made matters worst is that it was around the time our Kronos was due so the emails we were getting from HR/payroll just mentioned that they would let us know how to report our hours asap. I was worried that if I couldn't work from home that the closure would have to come from either my HAP/VAC time.

This confusion was shared by a few of my co-workers. I think part of the issue is there wasn't a big enough distinction in the inclement weather documentation between bad weather and Cornell actually closing.

So to wrap things up, I was just not sure if the university closing meant

I was expected to work from home at whatever capacity possible (even if it just doing email)

If I was allowed to continue working at 1.5x my hourly rate (my choice)

If I didn't put time in I would need to take it as personal time

If Cornell closing meant I was no longer allowed to continue working (paid day off)

I will say I do feel I understand the process better now but I did end up putting in some time "just in case" before fully realizing that I should have just taken the day off.

22. Faculty

I appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback. In particular, there are three issues that might have been improved upon in the way the University handled the most recent shutdown.

Closing Earlier, Rather than at Noon

On the first day of the snowstorm, I had a 9:05 class to teach. At that time, many of the roads were not plowed, the ICSD had closed schools, and the snow was accumulating rapidly without showing signs of stopping. It was not clear to me why the decision to close was not made until later that morning. Closing at 12:30 rather than closing for the entire makes it much more difficult for faculty and staff and is more dangerous as it forces people to commute twice in the midst of the storm. I understand concerns about a false positive shutdown if the weather improves, but in this case it appeared unlikely.

Clarify Communications regarding Anticipated Opening Time

When the University closed on the first day of the snowstorm, the message indicated that Cornell anticipated reopening at 12:30 the next day but that the situation would be reassessed. It was not clear from that communication whether there was any possibility that the University would open before that time. I assumed that the reassessment would only result in a later opening, but was not certain. Clarifying this would be helpful (as in, Cornell University is closed and will remain closed until at least 12:30 pm tomorrow). It would also be helpful to give a time by which the University will make a decision regarding the reopening time.

Make Decision regarding Opening Time Earlier

On the second day of the snowstorm, I was scheduled to teach a 2:55 class. It wasn't until fairly late that the update was given pushing the reopening back to 4:30. As a working parent whose children were home from school due to the closing of the ICSD, the uncertainty surrounding the reopening time made it difficult to be sure of my childcare needs.

23. Staff

I would say that closing should occur in anticipation of risky road conditions, BEFORE people travel to Cornell, so that they don't have to travel home on unsafe roads. That might mean the night before, so that facilities staff who arrive very early (and are non-essential) will get the message before they travel.

24. Staff

Because Cornell has *many* staff who commute long distances to work, it is an understatement to say we GREATLY appreciate Cornell closing during severe weather. Traditionally this has not been the case, only about once a decade do we close. But when it does happen, it makes staff feel valued—that our employer cares about our safety.

Without closer, Non exempt staff usually have to take their own personal accrued time (vacation or sick); while exempt can say they are working from home and do not have to use their personal accrual. This makes non-exempt staff feel that they are valued less and it's not fair.

We should not close for minor storms by any means. But when it is severe enough that there are travel alerts and warnings, it should definitely be considered. Using the methods of notification that are in place work perfectly.

I, personally, live in Owego and have a full hour's drive. I have colleagues that have the same commute, others I know come from Watkins Glen, all over the Fingerlakes, even as far as Rochester. I bet the majority of Cornell staff live at least a 30 minute drive from campus.

25. Staff

I think that in the event that it looks extremely likely that Cornell will have to shut down, it makes no sense to force workers to come in for half a day and close at noon. As I'm sure you're aware, the majority of employees at Cornell, at least in X, do not live in Ithaca, but in surrounding towns, many I know commute from Syracuse, quite a drive in a snowstorm.

By staying open, you forced us to not only risk making it into work, but then to turn around and go home after the storm had worsened. I think it's fair to say you easily foresaw the need to shut down for the afternoon, given that the area had said emergency travel only, Ithaca city hall was shut down already, etc. By closing the way you did for the last storm, you make workers feel like our health and safety are not priorities, and it also eludes common sense to have people come in to go home a few hours later, in more hazardous conditions than they came in.

I also know that not all unit managers let their employees go home at 12:00. My friend works at the X School, and they had to stay until their work was done, leaving my friend stranded as she doesn't drive and the TCAT was shut down. Again, this could have been avoided by calling the day that morning, but in the event that you choose not to, it should be clear to unit managers that it is not optional to let their employees go at closing time.

26. Staff

I feel the communication of the shutdown on Tuesday at noon was communicated well and thoroughly with the emergency system and the communication at the Cornell's website to close on Wednesday was informative.

27. Staff

Decide earlier about closing. A lot of staff live outside of the Ithaca area – once you get away from Ithaca, the weather can be totally different (worse).

Maybe go by what local schools are doing, and possible decide the night before if closing or delay.

28. Staff

I am a non-exempt Cornell employee that works off the main Cornell campus. I have office space located at []. It is my opinion that if this facility closes – for snow, power outage, facility issues such as water disruption, fire, or other unsafe working conditions – Cornell should recognize and honor the closure by providing us with a

Paid Leave – Local Facility Closed code to be used in Kronos. The use of the Paid Leave – Local Facility Closed code would need to be approved by my supervisor.

The current Cornell policy on snow days is unfair to non-exempt employees that work outside of Ithaca. If the office we work in closes, we are forced to take personal time to cover the building closure or, worse yet, go to work in a building that may not be safe to enter and work in. The only other option currently available, working from home, is not always practical for non-exempt employees.

29. Staff

Where can I find the current shutdown process protocol?

30. Staff

Don't close in the middle of the bloody day. At least set a one or two hour delay first.

31. Staff

For those of us traveling to campus from outside of Ithaca, an earlier determination of campus closing would be most helpful. Otherwise, we are at risk both coming and going.

32. Staff

Well, whatever you do, you need to make it absolutely clear and comprehensible exactly what the Cornell Weather closure policy is. And then follow it.

It looks from outside the committee that your current system is to make a judgement call based on who knows what factors (actual snow on the ground? perceived snow on the ground? Slippiness of a random street? unified forecaster models? knee pains? designated snow observer? No one knows what goes on behind the curtain...), with a dash of "we never close the University" hubris thrown in for good measure. Make that two dashes...

Now don't be all North Carolina "We're going to get an inch of snow! Buy all the milk NOW!" but don't be all "We are sturdy northern folks, descended from sturdier northern folks, why when I was a lad I used to walk to school in drifts over my head..." either.

But do be transparent. And be decisive, seems like indecision in the face of observable bad conditions caused you all a little bit of trouble last week, am I right?

33. Staff

I am one of the lucky folks who has a work situation flexible enough that I can plan ahead to bring work home. Therefore, if I feel it is unsafe to drive, I can stay home without losing work time.

For many people that is not the case. However, as most of us know, driving in bad weather is foolish, especially for folks living in outlying areas. Even when people are sensible drivers, there is no guarantee there won't be other careless, inexperienced drivers causing accidents.

With that in mind, whenever bad weather is predicted, it seems sensible to make it policy that employers cannot penalize employees for choosing not to take the risk. Perhaps if Cornell offered free accommodations for essential staff to make the decision to stay on campus to cover those who cannot make it, it would be less stressful for all.

I understand that Cornell is predominantly a pedestrian campus and many students live within walking's distance, hence the "no need to close" policy. But many of Cornell staff do not walk to work, and driving in harsh weather is always a gamble. Finding a way to minimize that risk would be the best policy.

34. Staff

I think it is potentially dangerous when Cornell decides not to close until the workday has begun. I personally did not come to work on Tuesday the 14th because colleagues who did drive in told me the roads were terrible and getting worse. So I was relieved the school closed at 12 noon but felt badly for my colleagues who now had to turn around and drive home in these worsening conditions. It makes me wonder what harm would have been done to close in the early morning, particularly when almost every other entity in Ithaca such as elementary schools and IC were already closed.

In the future, I would advocate for an earlier decision that always errs on the side of employee safety.

35. Faculty

It is a difficult situation. I appreciate the university's resolve to minimize the use of snow days. Our students pay a lot of money for their education, and snow days are very disruptive--we are still not quite back on track in my classes. I remember a couple of years ago Cornell decided to open late--and the bad weather never materialized. Everyone was upset by that too.

On the other hand, it was clear in this storm that having a major employer remain open caused a lot difficulty for the community. My PhD student, trying to get in to teach a class, slid off the road and was told by the sheriff who pulled her out to please, please just go home and cancel her class, which she did.

On the whole, the university does a good job of monitoring the situation. It is healthy for us to recognize that storms are not going to obey our meteorologists or conform to our planning. I am glad we have an alert system that reaches everyone rapidly so that classes can be canceled on short notice when conditions deteriorate quickly or in unforeseen ways. I recall an ice storm back before texting that created very serious conditions for everyone. Today that could be handled quite quickly with an alert.

Good luck with your efforts. I just wanted to look back over the years and reflect that sometimes we get it right and sometimes we don't but it is as much a function of weather as of planning.

36. Staff

I think you should consider that many people don't live on a bus line or close to work. Most people will risk their lives to come to work if they have to.

37. Staff

Thanks for reaching out to the community about this. I feel that the last snow storm was handled poorly, and created a dangerous situation for students and employees that commute. The University waited until it was too late to safely send people who don't live on campus home. The surrounding communities (including IC) had already announced school closures the day before. The sheriff had requested non-essential personnel stay home. New York City declared an emergency. This storm was known about very early in the week. Not closing campus the day before the storm was arrogant. Closing the University at noon, after substantial snow had already accumulated, was reckless. Regardless, you must be aware that many faculty cancelled classes independently of the University's decision to remain open, and many departments likewise let non-essential personnel stay home if possible. Then again, some did not. In short, it was a mess with no clear leadership.

I believe that a dangerous weather event was made much worse by the lack of clear and effective planning on the University's part. University Administration missed a very public opportunity to lead effectively and compassionately, and instead presented an aloof and fractured presence to students, staff, and community members. I implore you, in the future, to more carefully consider the ramifications of decisions that affect everyone in the many thousands strong Cornell & Ithaca community.

38. Staff

I live close to campus and coming in during adverse weather isn't a big problem for me. Likewise, there is no problem for the students who are all on or near campus and can walk to classes. However, we have faculty and staff who live, for example, on the west side of the lake, and coming in during adverse conditions can be very dicey for them. Driving through Ithaca and then up the hill to campus (and back down) when the roads are snow covered, is not something we should be asking them to do unless there is a very clear and urgent need for them to be on campus.

I'm not advocating shutting down campus for any old snow fall, but when we know its going to be bad, we should shut down far enough in advance to keep our faculty, staff, and students off the road and out of danger. Now, knowing exactly *when* to shut down is the hard decision. But that's why you get paid the big bucks, right?

39. Staff

I've been at the University for 30 years and have been through two, I believe, closures. Unfortunately, the closures occurred after we had all gotten into work. The forecasts were given for a few days before the storms actually hit and most places gave closing updates the day/night before the storms hit. Both times I was at work and then had to, fearfully, maneuver my way home.

With Stella, the predictions were being given the day before and there wasn't much thought as to WHETHER it was going to hit, it was more like WHEN. I believe it was the Blizzard of '93 where employees were put up in the Statler because they were already at work and the roads were being closed! Some may have also been essential employees who would be needed the following day.

My only suggestion is that the University give more thought to closing BEFORE people arrive at work. Paying employees to stay home and be safe is more humane than paying out death benefits fighting the elements to get to work only to have to turn around and go home.

40. Staff

I found it rude that you ignored what the rest of the county - and region - were considering, and made staff come in knowing what was coming, and that other institutions had closed, like IC, TC3 and children's schools, and that the county was likely to close the roads. "Arrogant Cornell disregarding everyone else and expecting its employees to serve it no matter the conditions or the toll on them."

I found the timing of your decisions to come in, then a few hours later to go home, privileged the wealthier white collar and faculty people, and those who could afford to stay home because they didn't need to save their paid time off for children or older parent care; single and/or younger people could take a paid day off with fewer worries. The earliest staff, maintenance for example, have to leave home in the dark, in heavy snow on dangerous roads because you didn't want to risk having to pay them to be safe. You waited too long to make an obvious decision for the safety of everyone on and off campus. "Selfish and greedy Cornell disregarding the safety of employees and anyone else to save a few dollars."

The way payroll is set up, those who cannot get out due to lack of plowing, or who live far from town and are considerate of others on the road, like emergency and plows, and choose to stay off the roads, are penalized. If you are afraid of losing your job, or for other reasons must risk yourself, then are sent home, you then get paid for the day. However, if you can't/don't come in, you must use your own time for the entire pay day. How about, when you do close the place, the rest of the hours that would have been worked are no longer out of personal time, but paid like those who came in and were sent home?

It seemed to me that you didn't show respect for the community, compassion for your workers, concern for any safety crews.... Cornell earns accolades for diversity, a workplace for mothers & families, town-gown efforts, etc, but when a few real dollars are involved, you threw everyone under the snow plow. This kind of snowstorm happens rarely enough, surely you can be a bit better! I respect that you ask. Thank you for listening.

41. Faculty

The appropriate criterion is whether students, staff, and faculty can travel to the campus safely, that is, whether the streets and roads are open to normal use. (Whether the busses are running may be the same criterion.) I enjoy a day off as much as the next person, but I support Cornell's long-standing practice to remain open as long as safe travel is possible. Of course, we should be generous about exceptions for individuals with special problems, e.g., an employee with young children when the schools are closed.

I would appreciate frequent updates when a storm strikes. During this recent storm, I didn't learn that the university would stay closed until 4:30 on Wednesday until after 11:00, though I checked hourly.

42. Staff

Thank you very much reaching out. One of my observations during this recent storm is that if campus will be closed due to a winter storm, Cornell might wish to consider designating one or more parking lots for which students, faculty, and staff should park prior to the storm's arrival. The few days after the storm it was somewhat hard to locate parking due to snow plows' inability to plow parking lots across campus because cars were parked overnight. I would also suggest that a decision be made earlier to close campus. I know many employees drove to campus only to turn around and drive back home when campus officially closed right before the storm.

arrived. Given many Cornell employees don't live in Ithaca, closing campus earlier could assist in ensuring safety for those who drive from a distance.

43. Staff

If the severity of the weather forecast warrants a campus shutdown, it makes good sense to decide this before the morning commute occurs. The recent closure was decided at the peak of the storm - endangering the members of our community by expecting them to travel during the very worst conditions. The forecast for Tuesday, March 14 clearly indicated that travel would be risky. Given this warning, a decision to close campus could have been made several hours before the morning commute. Such a decision would have been prudent and justified.

If the goal of a shutdown is to minimize the travel risk to students, faculty and staff, the closure decision should be timed to achieve that goal.

44. Staff

I've lived here since 1972 and know that the forecasts can be deceptive. Having said that, however...

The decision to open on Tuesday morning was an error in judgment. It had already been snowing for six hours by 6am, and there was no sign of it stopping. Closing at noon was disruptive to parents (who may have scrambled to find child care) and put Cornell employees on the road in more dangerous conditions than those at 6am.

By Tuesday evening, it should have been apparent that Wednesday would be worse than Tuesday, and the decision to close could have been made earlier than 9am.

I know it's hard to shut down all university operations, but this was one of those times when the administration should have risked erring on the side of caution. I don't envy your responsibility and appreciate that everyone involved was struggling with the decision.

45. Staff

I had to drop my daughter off on the morning of Wednesday, March 15th. Once I dropped her off, I went to the A lot to catch a bus that we were told started running at 10:00 am that morning. I waited for the bus with another person at the lot and no bus showed up yet and then we were finally notified that Cornell was closed until 4:30 pm. I did not wait until 4:30 pm to go to work because that is our usual time to leave work for the day. So then I had to drive all the way back home to Groton which is about 25 minutes away from campus.

I wish they would of notified us earlier about Cornell being closed that day. Thank you for listening to my concerns!

46. Staff

I found it incredibly irresponsible of Cornell to close at Noon on March 14 instead of closing in the morning when Governor Cuomo had issued a state of emergency.. It put many employees at risk of injury, both those that walk and those that drive. I came to campus then almost could not leave – I was a lucky one – I know some people

who live in Syracuse who drove all the way to Ithaca for work who were unable to return home... People who took their kids to daycare but could not pick them up for being stranded. Yes, this was a one in a quarter century kind of storm, but the weather forecast clearly detailed the rate of snowfall we were likely to expect. It irks me that an academic institution with such high prestige would ignore the facts until it was too late. The reaction was too slow. I really hope this does not happen again.

47. Staff

I think the process last week went about as smoothly and effectively as anyone could reasonably expect. I appreciated getting the notifications on my phone, both in the form of SMS message and email message. I wish the final announcement—the one that effectively closed the university for the full (business) day on Wednesday—had been issued sooner, but all things considered, I believe Cornell did the best it could with what was available at the time. Thank you for being thoughtful and transparent. Here's to milder days!

48. Staff

Snowdays in NYC are a bit different than Ithaca. The Cornell Store at Weill is located inside the Weill Cornell Medical Library. Therefore if the Library doesn't open or closes during the day, we must also. All our employees take trains to work. Needless to say if the trains stop running, which they normally do, no one can get in. If there's a snow emergency declared, non essential cars are banned, which directly affects me. I live North of the city and drive in every day.

49. Staff

I just want to point out that this would be a great time to check University Policy 8.2, Inclement Weather for accuracy, completeness, etc. Additionally, if and as we make changes to how we manage our behavior and services during a weather emergency, they should probably be reflected in the university policy.

50. Staff

Don't delay the shutdown, particularly when it is clear by the Doppler that the system is only going to get stronger and conditions worsen. Making people come to work on already hazardous roads that only get more treacherous by the minute just to close down and have them risk life and limb to get home is a little crazy. It is rare that conditions are that severe that the University has to close, but when they are, don't delay.

51. Staff

I think that the reason why we were, sort of, chaotic during the last university closure is because it coincided with payroll processing, so we did not have enough time to communicate to all what and how to enter time worked or not worked for those two days. We tried to send out communication regarding this on Wednesday, 3/15. but since the university was closed, nobody even bothered checking their emails (except maybe for a few 'conscientious' employees) – not entirely unexpected, since most employees don't even read our payroll reminders when the university is open. Anyway here were the few challenges we encountered:\

Limited time to process payroll – Suggestion: more back-up payroll reps for emergency purposes.

Prefilled time cards, so it was hard for PayReps to figure out whether the hours were actually worked, or pre-filled and should be adjusted for PDL (paid leave) – if actually worked, we also need to verify whether the work was ‘essential’ or not, and if it is essential, then it has to be coded UWB (worked/paid 1.5) + PDL to be paid premium. Suggestion: Revive the identification of ‘essential’ employees so we can program them in the system in a way that they get automatically paid premium (2.5X), and those non-essentials to be paid regular rate whether it is coded as UWA (worked/paid 1.0) or PDL

Additional suggestions, non-payroll:

Inclement Weather communication templates in place to be released with a click of a button to all staff, utilizing all modes registered, like the way it is done for emergency alerts; if needed, communication templates should be specific to the target population, i.e. payroll faculty, etc.

Closure policies should be area-specific, i.e. If other NYS areas are closed, and Cornell remains open, off site employees in those affected areas should be eligible as if Cornell was closed, and vice versa. CALS has so many off-site (outside NYS/USA) employees who could benefit with clear instructions on how to implement university policies on inclement weather.

Hope this helps – I will email you again if more things come to mind. Thanks for reaching out.

52. Staff

As many of us have families and need to coordinate schedules for children, it would be appreciated if you could commit to a plan far enough in advance so that we can make arrangements for pickups and childcare. Releasing us from work early, which I’m sure you have heard, does not save us the inconvenience or finances we have incurred because of Cornell opening on a day when nearly every other place of business asked its employees to stay home. In cases like the most recent storm, it is better simply to err on the side of caution than to ask people to find their way home before roads close or bus service ceases. While I’m sure there are many factors to consider when closing Cornell, using common sense should be the guiding principle.

53. Staff

Thank you for offering this opportunity for feedback. As a new employee finishing my first year as Cornell, I think it very important to rework this process as I immediately felt the stress and confusion negatively impacted my office. The number 1 priority of the university I believe should be ensuring the safety of employees and students during an extreme weather event – and given climate patterns- this won’t be the last.

I encourage the following factors be including in changes to process:

Communications PRIOR to the extreme weather event outlining the likely protocol if conditions worsen. This allows families to plan

Unneeded work obligations relieved for employees such as commute into work if their work can be done from home (in other words, an exception to normal employee flexible schedules)

Thank you again for showing an interest in helping the employees of Cornell!

54. Staff

I needed to be at work Monday evening and, hearing the forecast, made the decision to work from home on Tuesday and so took my work laptop home. That worked out great for me but other colleagues, who had come in to work as usual, had difficulties in getting home once the decision was made to shut down. It would have been beneficial for them if the decision had been made Monday night rather than Tuesday morning. (It was particularly difficult for a disabled colleague to navigate the snow Tuesday morning.)

55. Staff

I think it is great the University is following up on this after this last storm. I absolutely love being a Cornell employee and I often brag about how they take care of their employees. With that being said, I'm very surprised at how Cornell handles snow storms in regards to the employees. Please don't misunderstand, I completely understand that the vast majority of students are on campus and that there is so much more that meets the eye when it comes to these decisions. And, coming from a girl who grew up in Buffalo and doesn't bat an eye at a good snow storm, I was really surprised that this last storm, the "call" took so long for it to be made.

I guess I am more curious as to the reasoning behind it. Most of my colleagues had already made the unsafe decision to venture out in the storm or use a personal day – that just doesn't seem fair or safe on either end.

Since working at Cornell, this is the one thing that has surprised me. Cornell has gotten the bad label of "not closing for anything" and I frankly see that as sad. It just seems to be a far cry from everything else the university does. Everything Cornell does is top notch and absolutely takes safety for students and employees so seriously. Is there a reason that Cornell doesn't make this call in a similar fashion to other area universities, colleges or city schools?

I think the right decision was ultimately made with this storm but albite to late and therefore jeopardized the safety of those who felt that "had" to come in because they didn't have personal time or what not.

Please do not take my comments as harsh or rude, more from a place of trying to understand and offer an honest critique. Thank you for taking the time to first ask and then listen to what we as a community have to say.

56. Staff

If the snow is already coming down hard, and the radar shows it's not stopping throughout the day or next, please close BEFORE we drive on dangerous hills to come in. Many people come from very far away as you know. Luckily I'm near a bus route in North Lansing, so when the roads are bad I can take the bus in – many people don't have that option. BUT, I then run the risk of TCAT deciding to stop running, which is exactly what happened Wednesday. If my husband hadn't come to get me I would have been stranded for 2 days. I understand the kids still need food, etc. and some of those folks do need to come in of course, but many of us do not have direct dealings with undergrads that demands a daily presence. Thanks for asking!

57. Staff

My only suggestion would be to call it sooner if that's possible. I think it was fairly obvious to everyone who was watching the weather that even though it was bad, but not horrible going into the first morning, it was going to

get really bad. I personally got a few things done in my lab that morning, but I know most of the others in my lab started griping because it took them a little longer to get in, they were just about getting ready to get going on something when the snow day was called. At that point there wasn't much they could accomplish by noon so it was pretty much a wasted day. A wasted day that involved driving to and from the campus in pretty nasty and unsafe weather.

On a side note, I don't know when the decision was made to re-open at 4:30 rather than noon on the second day, but I personally would have appreciated if the full-day cancellation was announced the night before (assuming that the decision could have been called then) as I would have slept later the following morning. Instead I awoke earlier since I knew I would need several hours to dig out. This isn't such a big deal, but I get so few days when I can sleep in, it would have been nice (on the weekend I'm carting kids to hockey games, etc). Thanks.

58. Staff

I think this shutdown was the most humane one Cornell has done. From the beginning, you stressed safety, and that was backed up by my division leaders and supervisors. Though I spent most of my time home working for Cornell, because I was under time constraints on several projects, I was able to do that with full focus, rather than sitting in my office worrying whether I would be able to get home.

Also appreciated having the whole day Wednesday. Even if we could get in, battling the snow for parking and general getting around would have been dicey. Again, I got more done for Cornell, even after the university was officially closed, than I would have if I had come in.

59. Staff

I'm not really aware of what the 'shutdown' process is for snow days at Cornell. Luckily my supervisor is flexible, and I was able to take my computer and work from home if needed, which it was. I also travel 30+ miles one way, so it's usually very different from where I live as compared to Ithaca.

Obviously, we never know if we are going to get what the weather is reporting, but given this situation as well as all of the early school closings, including colleges (Ithaca, TC3, SUNY Cortland and Binghamton), it probably would have made more sense just to shut down the University first thing Tuesday morning, rather than having people come in to work for a few hours, and then have to drive home in it. I was also confused about the University reopening at noon on Wednesday, which was then pushed until 4:30. Again, most places were closed again for a second day, given the sheer amount of snow. I'm guessing reopening at 4:30 was moreso for the students, but at that point, wouldn't it have just made more sense to keep the University closed until Thursday?

As for receiving the alerts (text and phone call), that was fine – it's probably the quickest and easiest way to communicate with everyone.

60. Staff

When the University sees that the entire area schools and businesses (and beyond Ithaca) are shutting down (the night before a major storm) I believe Cornell should follow. It make the University look really bad when they do not do this.

I realize that the students are all here but for faculty and staff who live a distance away it is difficult to decide what to do. In the past I have come in only to worry about getting home. I rode a Tomtran in and they were going to stop running.

I did not come in either day during this storm as we had a family member in the hospital so I can't speak to what the campus was like but it took us until last weekend to clear our one drive way out. When Cornell remains open it is hard for the grounds personnel to clear out enough for those who have weathered the roads.

The county roads were closing in at least 2 counties and this was dangerous for motorists to be on the road.

From an administrative point of view (I handle payroll) it makes a payroll nightmare with many questions. The timing of this storm was right at the end of a pay period which made it difficult for the timecards to be processed and people have many questions on how to fill their timecards out. In short, just close the University, don't open then close or close and then open.

61. Staff

I think the biggest blind spot that I can see from my position is that the crews/staff that need to clear the campus and do some of the regular day-to-day work (thinking building cleaning, not paperwork) are some of the least well paid and therefore (because of Ithaca/Tompkins County's affordable rental/real estate problem – tangentially caused by Cornell) come from farthest away than the rest of the staff and especially faculty (many of whom do not have to deal with the same affordable rental/real estate because \$\$\$). This makes it unsafe for these employees, as dedicated as they may be, to even come to campus, much less clean it or clear it for the on-campus students and near-campus faculty.

Obviously Deans and Professors do not live further away unless it is by choice and therefore might not consider the very real consequences of requiring building care staff to drive upwards of 30 minutes (oftentimes more) to provide the basic service of cleaning and clearing the buildings and walks – and this at hours before snow plows even start clearing the roads! Obviously, if I saw a professor who lived near campus volunteering to clear walks so that students could attend classes, then this would be a moot point, but we all know that professors don't do that kind of work (unlike the City of Ithaca's Mayor, it should be noted).

Perhaps not obvious from this is that I do like working here and I believe in the mission to educate students (any person, any study). I also know that my position and supervisor is much more understanding towards taking time off during snow events than others might be.

62. Staff

I think most of us feel that being a non-exempt employee we have to get to work so we do what we have to regardless of worrying about our own safety.

The email that was sent out by the University basically says get here at all costs but if you feel you cannot? It is a conflicting email that basically says you need to go to work yet covering by saying if you don't feel you can in case there is an accident.

For all of us that braved Tuesday and came in the people that stayed home were the smarter ones. They got paid from noon on. I was under the impression that you were only entitled to that if you came in.

If the roads are bad and TC3, Ithaca College, Ithaca Schools, and everything is closing down the University should too and this should be a no brainer.

Most of Cornell's workforce travels long distances to work.

Last year there was a late open and I was enroute to work when the University closed so as I sat here alone at work I didn't get a pat on the back for showing up instead they were upset I came in.

Yes, First and foremost we need to make sure the students have food and supplies but all non-essential personnel should not be here.

I get it because of the students but staff is also very important and if is not an essential position then why not close the University? It is the right thing to do. It also shows employees that you care about their health and well-being.

63. Staff

There are many that live miles away from work and the roads are sometimes treacherous. I am all for snow days!!!

64. Staff

I think that the only thing I want to say after this last storm, is THANK YOU to the team who managed the closing decisions.

Yes, we live in Upstate NY, snow and ice are simply the reality up here, and we can't close the university every time the local schools close.. And yes, we have to make sure that our students are supported since they live on campus. But there are occasionally storms where the mission of the University should include an awareness of the safety of our personnel. This was one of those, and it was handled well. Campus wasn't closed until it was obvious that there really was a legitimate need for people to get off the roads and stay off of them, and changes were made when it was obvious that the storm wasn't letting up in time for a safe return to the administrative normal.

Thank you. I can't speak for everyone, but I felt like the safety of the non-essential, administrative staff was considered by the administration with how this was handled. I'm sure that there will be those with complaints, but Here's at least one voice saying you did it right. ☺

65. Staff

I have only worked here at Cornell for 16 years and travel a total of 50 + miles each day. I am a very committed employee and usually end up driving in all kinds of weather. I usually try to save some of my vacation just to cover snow days because then I never have to worry about not getting paid. Sometimes when I get to work on really bad snow days I worry more about getting home or not and or I am left with being one of only a few that show up to work at all. It is hard to know what to do, therefore, if there was any suggestion I could give it would be that Cornell decides earlier whether or not to open or close so that we can decide whether or not to drive in, depending on the weather report, or just use our own time. Also, I might add that I have never had a problem with my supervisor understanding that the weather where I live can be totally different from the weather in Ithaca, however, once you to get to work it is harder to leave early if you have no coverage in the office.

I did appreciate it very much having been paid for the recent snow storm. I waited two days to get shoveled out of my driveway. Thanks for asking for our input.

66. Staff

I think overall Cornell did a good job of using the alert system to notify community members of the weather conditions, but I do think the closure was decided upon too late...everyone did a mass exodus at noon and caused more traffic jams and I do think it increased the risk of accidents, which I saw more than a few of by the time I made it to the Varna area vs a preemptive closure in the early morning.

67. Staff

I was able to work from home on Tuesday morning when the university closed. This was a great help, as I didn't have to worry about getting home on the bus; I just worked until noon on Tuesday. I know that not everyone can work from home, but it would be nice if this were encouraged, so that people didn't have to use up their leave time if they are afraid of getting stuck.

68. Staff

If the roads are closed it should make a difference. I don't like being on the road when it gets that bad.

69. Staff

I live about 20 miles from campus in a very snowy location (not far from Summerhill). I decided against risking my health, car, and peace of mind so didn't drive in on that Tuesday morning. If I had taken the time, trouble, and gas to drive in, I would have had to turn around and drive home just a few short hours after arriving at work. I do know people who made the trip in, only to have to turn around and drive home. When all other local colleges are closed, it's safe to assume that the roads are not travel-worthy. Fortunately, my position provides enough flexibility that I don't feel pressured to drive when I know it's not safe; plus, I don't have young children at home so no need to deal with childcare on a very difficult day. A 9am closure would have been much better in my opinion.

70. Faculty

I made the decision to cancel my Tue morning prelim because of the weather. It was impossible for me to get to the university to proctor the exam. Perhaps students could not get to the exam as well, and I could not ask staff to be there to help.

I think the shut down call should have been made in the morning. Junior faculty might not have been as emboldened as I was in making this decision, and someone could have been injured by trying to drive in the conditions that were already building by mid morning. It was clear that the weather forecast was spot on, and it should have been heeded. Forecasts are getting quite accurate for a three or four hour prediction, and we should acknowledge this accomplishment of modern technology.

71. Staff

My thought is that it would be extremely helpful to those of us who commute long distances to know as far advance as possible if the University was closing. And that perhaps decisions should be made sooner, especially when severe weather is imminent.

I live in Cortland, which (on a good day) is a 20-30 minute drive. On hazardous weather days it can easily turn into an hour or more of driving in hazardous conditions, and on some roads that are not always maintained very well. I know that some employees come in from points that are even farther away (some people travel from out of state), and I think it would be very helpful for them to not have to turn around mid-trip. And of course it is not just staff, but also some faculty and students that may have to travel in hazardous conditions.

Also, because bus services sometimes shut down and/or roads close, it leaves people stranded here if closures are done *after* people arrive. And in fact, one year my sister and I (both longtime Cornell employees) had to spend the night at the motel up by East Hill Plaza because the roads got too dangerous to travel on and were shut down. We had to pay for that expense out of our own pockets, and that was difficult. We also did not have certain items with us (contact lens solutions, cases, etc.) and so in addition to paying for a motel, we had to run over to the East Hill P & C to purchase "emergency items" to be able to stay over.

That being said, I am glad you are asking about this, because even though Cornell has only closed a couple of times since I started working here (back in 1988, almost 30 years ago), it would be really great to see some revisions in the decision to close process, so that it puts less of a burden on those who commute. And also some supervisors (despite all of the memos sent out) are not very understanding of those who are not comfortable driving in bad weather conditions. I am lucky to have a great supervisor who is understanding, but I know of others who do not have this luxury.

I hope that some positive changes will be made, and thank you again for asking for input.

72. Faculty

One thing I wish had been handled differently was the statement that Cornell "expected"/"planned" to reopen at noon on Wednesday; it was ambiguous to me whether that meant there was some chance it might reopen sooner, and a definitive statement that it would not open any sooner than noon Wednesday would have been much appreciated. Since I lecture on Wednesdays 10-11, it wasn't clear if I should be telling my students that lecture might happen because Cornell might decide to open.

73. Staff

I don't remember a notice about Cornell shutting down being posted on the local radio and tv stations. Getting a notice to media and then media broadcasting the shutdown would help. I have a flex place agreement so I can work from home as needed.

I am also wondering if policy needs to be clarified or reminded. Are employees with flex place agreements expected to work from home when the university is shut down for weather?

74. Staff

Thank you for soliciting ideas about snow storm course of action. I was very upset after being told the university would not be closed on the first day of the storm, only to be told the university would be closing mid-day less than 3 hours later on the same day. The conditions were MUCH worse at noon than in the morning and every imaginable weather forecast had predicted as such. It seemed like the decision to remain open that morning endangered a lot of people, especially staff who work regular full time hours.

75. Staff

First of all, I'm an upstate NY native, and I've lived in Rochester and Syracuse most of my life, so I know about snow. I've only had about 5 snow days in my entire life.

But last week the university should have proactively closed for Tuesday and Wednesday. Not necessarily at the same time, but definitely by midnight Tuesday morning for that day, and by 3pm on Tuesday for the following day.

I didn't make it to work until 10:40 on Tuesday, and literally the moment I walked in the door I was told the university was closing in 1.5 hours. Fine, except I was there and had work I needed to do. So I stayed to work until 1:15. I did not know that TCAT was going to stop running the buses through campus at 1:00 or I definitely would have left before then. If that is a policy of TCAT's, it should have been in the Cornell closing email. There were multiple other employees from all different departments at the bus stop with me and we waited 20+ minutes before we realized the service was canceled. I then had to walk to A Lot in driving snow and wind.

The next morning I needed to go out at 9:00 to dig my car out, so I could get my daughter to daycare by 11:30, so I could get to work by 12:00. Except 90 minutes later when I came back inside I saw the email that the campus had been closed until 4:30. There is no reason that call couldn't have been made by midnight. The roads were closed, we didn't know when they would be open again. It should have been a precautionary closing. Many people live 1+ hrs away and would literally be risking their lives to get to work on a trip that would have taken 3x as long in the snow.

To say nothing of the fact that the subject of the email was "Cornell Ithaca Campus to Reopen at 4:30" – and all I could see of the subject before opening it was "Cornell Ithaca Campus to Reopen", so if I hadn't opened the email I could have easily assumed it was reopened. That's a simple fix. "Cornell Ithaca Campus Closed Until 4:30".

It was dangerous to make people come to campus on Tuesday and drive home in the snow. It was dangerous to encourage people to plan to travel on Wednesday. It's not reasonable to assume that saying "people need to decide if they should stay home" covers things, because plenty of hourly employees simply don't have that flexibility in their jobs.

For goodness sake, Syracuse University closed for 2 days in a row. That's literally never happened in the history of that university. We don't always get the same snow as Syracuse, but we knew we were this time. Ithaca is not more prepared than Syracuse for that kind of storm.

I do think the university screwed this up. But, for the record, I think the grounds/facilities employees did a really remarkable job doing everything they could to keep things going as long as possible, and to get things going again as soon as they could.

Perhaps nothing changes. There will probably not be another incident like this in the next several years. But I'm very pleased to hear the university is open to reviewing the process that didn't work in this instance.

76. Staff

If you know that there is going to be a huge storm like this shut down before everyone heads out and then gets stuck driving home on horrible roads. There were several colleges that closed for that kind of weather.

77. Faculty

That particular storm- it was more dangerous to bring staff here and then send them home. However, being a faculty in residence on North campus I have no idea how you would get everyone here to feed the students and maintain campus essentials...I feel for you. Hopefully it will be one every ten years or so like that one.

78. Faculty

Thanks for looking at this. One thing that came up during the recent storm is that there seemed (at least to an outsider) to be little consideration for the experience of non-academic staff. One issue is when you send people home at Noon, suddenly you have large numbers of staff trying to get on busses at the same time as students. I don't know how flexible TCAT is but perhaps some arrangement could be made in advance. Also when there is ambiguity about when staff will return, that may create significant problems for child care etc. Also many staff live at significant distances from Cornell. In addition they may be encountering significantly worse weather. Making the decision to come in for part of a day can be problematic.

My knowledge of this is second hand; you really should include staff (perhaps the employee assembly) in this discussion. I suspect you already have plans to do so.

79. Faculty

And one more... It was a bit unfortunate that Cornell declared that it was closing 30 minutes after I arrived on campus (expecting to hold an afternoon exam for students in a half-semester course). But I'm not sure whether that was preventable. I preferred that Cornell decide to wait and see how bad things were likely to get before making the decision to close (unlike ICSD, which decided to close before it started to snow).

80. Staff

Thank you for asking for input on this most difficult decision, Dr. Van Loan. I know that there are many, many things to balance when making this decision and, although I wish it could be made much earlier, I do understand how hard that is to put into practice. My top concern is always for our custodial staff, many of whom live so very far away and must drive in to work before roads are plowed.

I also write to describe my situation as a TCAT rider from Trumansburg. I love the fact that I can so easily pick up a bus from that far out and make it to work on time every day. I know that there is no perfect answer for all, and I'm not really complaining. Because I ride the bus, I realize that there are many days that I can get in to work to help keep our office running when others do not dare to drive in. I am glad that I can help in this way. Some days, it can be particularly tricky however.

When, as happened last Wednesday, the determination to extend the noon opening to 4:30 is made after 9am, it creates a particular difficulty. You see, the last trip out of Trumansburg each morning is at 9:14am. The next trip out after that is at 1:49pm. So the decision for me is:

do I take the chance that Cornell will be open and ride in at 9:14am which gets me to campus at 9:45 am (2 hours & 15 minutes early) and perhaps was altogether unnecessary because a complete closure happens while I'm still on the bus and there may be no bus to take me home at all but surely not until at least 12:51pm. or

do I wait until 1:49 to go into work, in case Cornell closes, and arrive 2.5 hours late for work which almost means it isn't worth it to go in at all.

Thank you for asking for input on this most difficult decision, Dr. Van Loan. I know that there are many, many things to balance when making this decision and, although I wish it could be made much earlier, I do understand how hard that is to put into practice. My top concern is always for our custodial staff, many of whom live so very far away and must drive in to work before roads are plowed.

81. Staff

Please refrain from closing the university in the middle of the day during a storm. Just close for the whole day at the outset. Midday closings mean that staff from outlying areas have to drive in in the morning in poor conditions, and then return home midday or early afternoon, again in poor conditions. It could save a life.

82. Staff

I was grateful that someone at Cornell seemed to be thinking of the safety of staff, students, and faculty.

83. Staff

The notification process for the snow days ran very smooth and I did not feel there was any confusion in that regard.

I came upon a variety of issues when it came to completely hourly timecards and I felt that the policy was lacking in most of the areas.

There was a lack of policy on students and how they would be paid if they worked over the closing.

There was a lack of policy on temps and how they would get paid.

Thank you for the email and requesting feedback for the "shutdown" team, here at Cornell University.

84. Staff

My only concern with the recent storm, is every news station from here to national coverage, gave us all extreme fair warning (meaning eminent threat of white out conditions). The fact I drive from a long distance every day to work, isn't a concern until moments like this arise.

It concerned me the university decided to wait until 12pm on Tuesday, March 14, to close campus. While I appreciate, the care taken for the student, faculty and staff alike, it seemed haphazardly to determine a closure at that given time, and put many staff that commute via personal vehicles each day back out in the worst of driving conditions some ~4hrs after arriving on campus.

The roads were not tended to by the state and town road crews due to (IMHO) the state of emergency declared by the governor, thus creating a “white-knuckle” commute home.

While I realize education, and keeping the campus alive and open is Cornell’s top priority, contemplating a closure at noon vs earlier that day in hindsight seems more appropriate. I know it’s easy to be a ‘Monday morning quarterback’ but I felt the same way, driving in that day and felt even more driving home.

Many thanks for reading and taking my feedback into consideration.

85. Staff

Thank you for asking. I have worked for Cornell almost 24 years and this is the first time I have been asked about this process.

I was very relieved that Cornell shut down. I do wish they shut down earlier. My husband works at [] and they shut down early that morning before people left for work.

86. Staff

I thought it ridiculous to send an email the day before the storm, basically stating that faculty and staff were expected to show for work. I did come into work that Tuesday, only to be told via email that the school would be closing at noon, when of course road conditions had become even worse. It is a sad state of affairs when radio stations poke fun of the fact that of course only Cornell University would still be open.

87. []

88. Staff

I suggest that if any three of the following are true regarding a predicted or on-going snowstorm, Cornell should close:

Ithaca High School, Boynton Middle School will close 8 inches of snow or more are forecast within a 24 hour period

The temperature with wind-chill is projected to be 5 degrees F or below for 48 hours during the storm and after

The police have advised against all unnecessary travel

A state of emergency has been declared in Tompkins County

The Cornell President cannot drive safely from their house to Day Hall

Local school closings mean that 15% of staff will need to stay home -see next paragraph.

To help make snow day decisions, Cornell should have an idea of the child-care impact on its employees when various schools close. I suggest that Cornell survey (anonymously if you want) its workers at the beginning of the school year to report whether a snow day at a certain school means that the worker will need to stay home.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide suggestions for determining when Cornell should close due to snow.

89. Staff

From the library's perspective, having the University close the first day at noon rather than the previous night was quite inconvenient. The forecast was very clear and many staff could not make it in time to open. This resulted in having to scramble the whole morning, make decisions that we are not going to open certain libraries, update hours on the web page, constantly monitor the forecast and the university updates, and ultimately, when the closure was announced, worry about staff that had to travel home in really bad conditions. Most of the other Ivies announced that they would be closed the previous day. Opening at 4:30 the next day was also hard, although at that point the roads were clear and we managed to open the bigger libraries. Thanks.

90. Staff

I feel like Cornell stays open (or decides to open) despite what everyone else is doing (for good reason), and I guess I am at a loss as to why.

This last storm was a prime example. Everything was closed due to the amount of snow we received, how quickly it came down, and the forecast for more along with high winds. I live in the country, but felt like I had to try. I got as far as the county road and saw that it was not plowed and decided to go back home. Fortunately, I have vacation and personal time I can take. There are others who do not and had to risk the roads to come in, only to leave at 12:00 before the roads were closed. Why is it that the only time Cornell closes is just before they close the roads? It feels as though Cornell does not value the safety of its employees, many of whom, I am certain, had a very difficult drive in and home that day. I am very dedicated (as are many of my colleagues) and I will make every effort to come to work (as I did with our last big snowstorm – I had to crawl down the hill to do it, but I came in). At some point, shouldn't Cornell make the decision that it is not worth someone being hurt (or wrecking their car) to come to work?

91. Faculty

I thought the snow day closings at Cornell were just fine this year. Yes, the students are there, but the faculty and staff aren't. It would be too sad if someone was killed in an accident just because they were trying to get to campus to teach a class.

I had a class to teach on Wednesday afternoon, and I only get paid if I teach, but I felt the closing was well worth keeping everyone safe. There are plenty of staff who can get there safely, and the job has always gotten done.

If anything, I have thought in the past that Cornell should have closed when it didn't. This year was an exception to the rule.

92. Staff

I work in the [] Department, we have a large lab program that has many large enrollment classes serving a large percentage of the undergraduate class each semester. Most of our laboratory component classes have a lab section scheduled 1x or possibly 2x week.

The issue of closing campus for unscheduled partial or whole days can wreak havoc on our lab director's experiment rotations. The only clear option now is to reduce the number of experiments done in the term mid stream to restore even numbers of student lab days. If the university does not want to plan for a "floating interruption day" that could be made up by declaring a day at the end of term to be run as whatever day of the week was missed, difficulties will arise with any unplanned class day interruption.

Clearly, the university is obligated to close if the county or the state mandate that roads are closed to non-essential traffic. 1993 blizzard had road closures, and Mother nature had the good sense to unleash that storm on the day before spring break, minimizing the impact to class schedules and most of our distant commuters.

Short of a real discussion about re-balancing our semesters to have equal numbers of days of the week and possible floating day to be reclaimed at end of term,

I think the 2017 storm was handled pretty well. I would only have wished for earlier announcement of the full day closure.

Living very close to campus, my commuting experience does not conform with most staff members' experiences. Unlike most of the rest of University Faculty and Staff, my commute on these particularly snowy days is fun. I can ski to work.

93. Staff

First of all I want to thank you for actually closing the university.

That said, I had staff that were stuck here on Tuesday because their bus routes home quit running before they had a chance to leave. Also on Wednesday the announcement that Cornell wasn't opening arrived only two hours before staff had to be here. Some staff members were clearing snow and heading to work to try to make it on time and missed the announcement. Several people were sitting in the A lot when they received the alert.

94. Faculty

I was put in the uncomfortable situation of having to drive to school to teach in weather I'd rather have not been driving in, taking along my son whose elementary school had a snow day. Three wishes:

Cornell should be more comfortable calling snow days, not necessarily liberally, but certainly in cases where it is pretty clear that Cornell's people will face difficult commutes to/from school. It seems the fact that Cornell called a snow day was as much the story as the snow day itself and I'm unsure why Cornell differs from other schools in this respect.

If there are widespread K-12 school closings there are many people at Cornell who are parents and impacted by this and it would be nice if this were a consideration in Cornell's decision-making, in addition to the more direct impact of a weather event on university operations.

It would be nice if Cornell were willing to take risk and *predict* rather than *react*. Giving greater lead time on the decision to close would be extremely helpful. That means being willing to make the call early and be wrong once in a while if the weather forecasters are wrong and there's less snow than expected, as an acceptable cost of helping things go more smoothly when significant weather events are approaching.

95. Staff

I feel the college should be closed prior to people risking their lives to come in to school or work and before we are stuck at Cornell because the weather is so bad we can't get home. There was a state of emergency called for all of New York at the beginning of storm Stella, other schools headed the warning why didn't we? Ithaca has a difficult time removing snow, if we know we are getting snow at the rate of 2 to 3 inches an hour, why make it more difficult with traffic from the college? I guess my suggestion is head the warnings and pay attention to the weather reports.

96. Staff

My biggest concern with the snowdays decision was the re-opening at noon on Wed., when no buses were running on my side of town, and I wasn't able to get my car out of my driveway!! I think the bus schedule should be taken into consideration when determining when to re-open if it is not a normal morning start time.

97. Staff

Oh yes, the driving was awful— dangerous. I made it in just before noon for a 12:20PM class and was so grateful for the shutdown. Even with turning right around, I feel like I barely got home in time to spare myself a real disaster on the road. Thanks for making the right call.

98. Faculty

I teach three classes a total of 5 meetings on any Wednesday this semester (three lectures and two discussions). The Tuesday of the storm I was also scheduled to give a guest lecture in another class. The NWS forecast for this storm indicated intense snow on the Tuesday night through to Weds evening, so I wasn't really expecting for classes to be held. However, I came in prepared to lecture on Tuesday morning at around 10:00 am. The official notice came out to shut campus about an hour after I arrived - and it indicated an opening time of 12pm the following day. The following day I was scheduled to give a lecture at 12:20pm, so I drove in - under pretty dangerous conditions - at around 10am again, but found only after I arrived that campus was again shut to 4:30pm.

In my opinion, that second closure could have been handled better - and less last minute. Looking at the radar and conditions of roads on Wednesday morning, it was clear that neither the storm was abating nor that roads were safe to drive on in the region. It caused a dangerous situation for faculty driving in from surrounding areas in anticipation of classes, and caused more headaches with the class schedule because of the last minute cancellation than if we'd had ~ 12 hours notice. Even if heavy snow stops or dissipates, dangerous conditions continue for driving and even walking around campus that are unlikely to be cleared

quickly. It just seems to me that a decision on opening campus should have been made in view of NWS warnings, and a look at regional radar to proactively shut campus. It often takes faculty some time to make it to Cornell from their residences (I live 35 mins away), and also time to prepare once on campus (hence my earlier arrival on the Wednesday).

While I understand that we try and keep campus open as much as possible, my impression is that it is easier to deal with entire days being cancelled in advance than hours in a day that are canceled last minute.

99. Staff

Thanks for seeking feedback on this! I didn't have a problem, but I knew about staff who live a half hour or so away from campus and had already been in the car on their way to campus on Wednesday morning when the campus closed for the rest of the day. My thought is that at that point, all other colleges in the area as well as schools and businesses had decided to close by 6am and it created unnecessary and dangerous travel for staff in outlying areas.

Also, there was a lot of discussion in my office about whether or not we were considered essential staff and I found I was not able to access the website that provided that information on those days. Is there a way to provide that information ahead of time so that we aren't trying to figure that out as the incident is happening? Thanks again for the opportunity to provide feedback!

100. Staff

Thanks for soliciting our thoughts. It's difficult to predict how much snow will fall during these weather emergency alerts, but I feel it is safer for all concerned to err on the side of caution and close the university before most employees come to work (no later than 6am, earlier if possible). For those employees do come in, getting back home can be extremely difficult, if not dangerous. Department managers also face a difficult time closing facilities, especially facilities used by the public (such as libraries). I understand that when classes are in session, the consequences of closure are greater; but community safety should never be compromised on that basis.

101. Faculty

Thanks for your activity on this issue. I thought that Cornell had learned from the shutdown in 1993(?) that its gung-ho attitude towards remaining open at all costs overwhelmingly affects staff who can't afford to live nearby or risk losing pay if they don't show up for work. Furthermore the people who clear the roads and sidewalks, and the janitors and food workers often have to work at night or very early in the morning, so probably face the worst driving conditions and coldest temperatures.

This storm was predicted for days and government and other shutdowns were announced well in advance, locally, regionally and all over the East coast. Why did Cornell think it would somehow be immune from this? I know that most students, many faculty and some staff live nearby, but many don't. I live in [] and had no urgent responsibilities on Tuesday and the fitness classes I attend at HNH had already been cancelled, so I waited until mid-morning to drive to Ithaca. I assumed that since Cornell had opened, I should come to work. Although the roads were very slippery, I made it without incident, at least partly because there was no traffic on the roads except for a few snow ploughs.

As I parked my car I was told that Cornell was closing at noon (presumably because the sheriff was closing the roads at 3pm), so I got straight back in my car and drove home before the rush started. I had memories of a previous time that Cornell closed belatedly and everyone drove home in the middle of the day at the height of a snow storm. On that occasion, in addition to avoiding all the traffic, I had to stop 3 times to clear snow off my windshield as the wipers were unable to keep it clear. I made it home but ended up in the ditch outside my house as the visibility was so poor (a good thing, actually as I didn't have to dig out a space to park).

The column in the *Cornell "Daily" Sun* on 21st March by DongYeon (Margaret) Lee entitled "For the Safety and Wellbeing of Cornellians" <http://cornellsun.com/2017/03/21/lee-for-the-safety-and-wellbeing-of-cornellians/> raises the exact concerns that I had. I can't believe that our students' education would suffer significantly if Cornell had one or two snow days each year. Occasionally these may turn out to have been unnecessary. However asking so many employees to risk life and limb in a storm like the one we have just had, should never happen. Many people chastised Cornell faculty for holding classes and failing to acknowledge the traumatic result of last fall's election. While the election results were clearly a shock to most people (regardless of how they voted) this snowstorm was a much more important reason for cancelling classes. I realize that this would have inconvenienced students and possibly risked accidents because of uncleared roads and footpaths. However, I understand that students frolicked on Libe Slope (and left a huge amount of litter) so it might have been better if they were snug in their dorms doing a bit of extra studying for their prelims.

Please be more sensible and safe in future. Weather forecasting is not an exact science, although it is improving all the time, but when a severe storm is forecast for our region, Cornell should not wait until the storm is here and at or close to its height to close.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.

102. Faculty

The notices were very good. The only suggestion I have is that when there is 100% certainty that we are going to have a significant snow storm, it would be good to shut down before everyone has to travel to work in the snow instead of at mid-day. This was a very rare occasion when it was certain that we were going to be hit with a storm like this.

103. Faculty

I really think that Cornell needs to act faster with regard to shutting the campus when there is inclement weather - on Monday March 13 pretty much all the schools in the Tompkins county area (and beyond) were reporting that they were to be closed on the 14th, however Cornell did not close until 12pm on the 14th - and the announcement was made after personnel had struggled to get onto campus, risking life and limb in the process.

In previous years Cornell has remained open when other schools and similar associations have closed. I feel that Cornell should aim to be a leader in caring about the safety of students and employees and take the initiative to close when required, rather than be a follower - when people may have already endangered themselves.

Thank you for opening up this discussion. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

104. Staff

Thank you so much for providing an opportunity to share thoughts about closing decisions. I realize it is complex and requires balancing a wide range of sometimes competing issues. Not to mention the profound challenges entailed in rescheduling prelims!

My main concern is to urge the university to consider that many staff live in rural areas. The University should not have opened at all the first day of the recent storm. The weather prediction was severe and consistent across all reporting sources and was broadcast well-ahead of time. By the time staff were able to go home, many roads were dangerous and nearly impassable. Many schools were already closed that morning, causing challenges for working families in finding day care.

This has happened before. Staff were expected to get home *after* county roads were declared closed by the sheriff due to unsafe conditions.

Some staff who live furthest away may be lower income staff who cannot afford to live in Ithaca. They do not want to use vacation time or lose pay by deciding not to come to work when the University is officially open. But they are the ones who face the most dangerous situations trying to get back home.

105. Staff

My main comment regarding the recent snow day on Wednesday March 15 is that the decision that the university would be closed that day should have been made much earlier in the morning. It having been announced the day before that we would re-open at noon on Wednesday, in the morning I checked the announcements of closings on several local TV news stations but saw nothing, and there was no message to the contrary when I checked my e-mail by 9 a.m., so I walked in expecting to start work at 12. Luckily I do not have to drive. The announcement that the university would open at 4.30 was not sent out until 9.45 a.m., nor did anyone bother to change the "re-opening at noon" sign on Olin Library. Library patrons were equally confused.

I am often frustrated that news of this kind pertaining to Cornell is usually not to be found on the purportedly local news stations. Also, there needs to be a more efficient way of sending campus-wide alert messages. The office phone is not going to be any help when campus is closed!

106. Faculty

I know it is difficult to make a policy that covers every situation (much less makes everyone happy), but I'd like to see the decision to close the University made for full days only. When you close for an afternoon (only) or an evening (only), you risk stranding people at Cornell who traveled there under marginal conditions. Recently, Cornell closed for the afternoon because of snow conditions. I traveled in to teach my class in the morning under bad conditions that were predicted to get worse. When the University closed for the afternoon, I had to get home under extreme conditions. I thought--given the overwhelming forecast for the afternoon--that the University should have closed for the whole day.

107. Staff

Thanks so much for soliciting our feedback! I have worked at Cornell for nearly 20 years, so I've seen a lot of storms come and go. Always, when in years past Cornell stayed open no matter what, my impression was that

Cornell thought they were doing a service to the students to stay open, but in fact it put the students in a terrible bind—either miss classes or go out in very uncomfortable and dangerous conditions (often, students had to clamber over tall snow banks, walk in the street, or walk on slippery sidewalks).

And it was terrible for staff, as they had to commute long distances, often in very scary and dangerous conditions. A number of times, staff were stuck overnight on campus, when roads were closed or too dangerous.

One year, there was a petition asking Cornell to re-think this stance that garnered a great many signatures—thousands, if I recall. Therefore, I was overjoyed when Cornell exercised sensible precautions and shut down during the storm. Good choice!

108. Staff

I realize it's a strain on the university to shut down in the event of a storm as we all have teaching duties, exams etc that then need to be made up. However, the fact that the university doesn't work with the local school districts in considering weather related closings puts an enormous strain on faculty and staff families with children. As salaried faculty we feel less of an impact because we have more flexibility with our work schedules, but hourly employees are faced with either having to take a vacation or personal day to care for children, or driving when road conditions may be truly awful and scrambling to find last minute care. Because the school districts often don't make decisions until an hour or so before the start of the school day, it's usually not possible to set up care ahead of time.

Ithaca city school district rarely takes more than a few snow days a year. It would be a very family friendly policy for the University to take the school districts into consideration when evaluating a shutdown. There are also many new digital technologies that make it feasible for staff and faculty to work, hold class or deliver/collect assignments remotely in the event of a snow day (Periscope, Zoom, Box, Skype). Perhaps these could be facilitated ahead of time as a back-up plan for weather closing.

109. Staff

Here's a crazy idea. If there's a State of Emergency declared by the governor...maybe don't make people come into work.

110. Staff

Many thanks for the chance to comment. I think there is a fundamental difference among colleagues: to some, when the weather is "iffy," the default decision is "come in." Among others, is "iffy," the decision is to "stay off the roads." I am in the latter camp, especially when the governor indicates that statutory personnel in all regions of the state except for the North Country should stay home. I'm not sure how to address this fundamental difference in paradigm, but I would like to see a shift in thinking – across the board. I write from the perspective of a rural, nonparent driver who works in an office.

I understand that for the executives, clinicians, deans, plant/animal technicians, safety workers, and grounds crews, their arrival is often expected – and I am grateful for it. I am frustrated that so many other people choose to come in for work that could be postponed or completed remotely; in the event nonessential travelers need assistance en route, there is a real safety cost to the emergency personnel who must rescue them, as well as to

other people who may need to be rescued. Thus, in times of inclement weather, I think it is socially irresponsible for nonessential employees to travel a significant distance to work. Essential personnel have cards demonstrating that status; for the rest, working at home is often an option that should be encouraged more. The governor himself asked people to stay off the roads. As a rural driver, I have little choice in method of commute – I will not risk anyone’s safety, so my default answer is to stay home. I’m capable to manage requests online, and to clear my dean’s calendar to save attendees of those meetings from making similar decisions.

I thought it was helpful to indicate that the likely opening time of day 2 of the recent storm would be noon, as it allowed people to make decisions about attendance.

I do know that years ago, when I would ride my bus in inclement weather (prior to the elimination of public transportation in Tioga County), had I arrived in the morning and the university closed early, I would have been stuck in Ithaca. I’m sure that you’re aware of this impact on those who have limited transportation options, and the emergency transportation option offered by the university. I almost needed it once.

Perhaps professors should be encouraged to have one one-line module available per spring semester so that they and their students have an option to invoke from the warmth and safety of their respective homes.

111. Staff

I understand that decisions to close the university during extreme weather are complex. In my opinion, closing from 12noon-12noon for 24 hours is very inconvenient, and it might be better to close an entire day from morning to evening.

112. Faculty

Cornell’s snow days seem to operate under the assumptions that: (1) this is a residential campus and, therefore, the students can walk to get here; (2) the faculty live close enough to get here, all have the ability to shovel themselves out, and all have clear enough roads to get here, and (3) the presence of our staff during a snowy period is unimportant.

The first one only holds for students who can walk or ride the bus—and only as long as the bus is operating at a full schedule and on time, but it is not true for the graduate students who serve as TAs and live further away. The second is not true and neither is the third, as was so painfully evident in the difficulty getting into some classrooms for evening prelims.

Driving in Tuesday morning to teach was actively dangerous as the roads were worse than my driveway. Class attendance was decent, but the students were overwhelmingly freshmen and sophomores. By the time I could go home at noon, it was a real effort to clean the snow off my car, but the roads were not as bad. However, I am speaking as someone who learned to drive in Buffalo and drives a car with front-wheel drive, winter tires and a manual transmission. Most of the drivers on the road are not as well prepared/equipped.

I think that the most useful thing that your group could do is to re-examine these assumptions and then build a new set of policies based on better assumptions. My thoughts for what they are worth. . .

113. Staff

Thank you for reaching out for employee feedback about Cornell's snow day "process". I will have worked at CU 33 years on May 2, and this is the first time that I can remember anyone touching base with employees. I appreciate the effort.

A brief background so that you know that I'm not a whiny slacker: I've worked at Cornell for nearly 33 years. I'm never sick so my HAP time is always close to the max accrual allowed. I worked as an exempt administrator for most of my career and put in roughly 45-50+ hrs. per week. I'm now hourly and it makes me crazy that I can't work till the work is done. Cornell's loss if you ask me. Quite simply – I like to work and I don't complain.

However, based on those 33 years of experience, my opinion of our inclement weather policies is less than positive. In fact – it most often puts dedicated employees at risk in dangerous conditions. When schools are closed the roads are not plowed early enough or frequently enough for the morning and evening commutes. When conditions are bad – it's not a surprise so this is a baffling decision on the part of the local towns and county.

Furthermore, most employees live remote to the immediate Ithaca area and their commute to Cornell is not short/quick.

Far too often the university has waited until road conditions are impassable or nearly so before closing, and I can remember several days when the country declared a state of emergency before Cornell even closed.

The university is "open" but staff and faculty cannot get here – so how about those poor dedicated students who trudge through adverse conditions to get to a class with no instructor? Or drive in from locations outside of the area for the same result?

When schools are closed children are home, so parents need to be there too. Not fair to those employees who do not have children and feel the need to risk the trip to cover the office

Essential staff are not clearly defined. What is truly essential – certainly not library staff, payroll staff, accounting staff, administrative assistants, financial aid and admissions, etc. Hopefully it's noted in the employee's job description and they should be paid appropriate – temp and/or staff both (benefit eligible or not).

Parking lot and sidewalk maintenance – the crews can't and don't keep up.

If an employee (such as myself) lives on a road that isn't plowed until after noon – why should the employee have to take personal time due to a situation over which s/he has absolutely no control.

Hourly employees who do make an effort to come to work but arrive late due to the inclement conditions, should not be penalized by having to use personal time in order to get full pay. Faculty and other exempt staff still get full pay – truly unfair. (Personal example – I had to use 3.5 hours of personal time last Tuesday but as noted above – had no choice in whether or not I could even try to drive into work due to the unplowed road.)

The university needs to be more proactive in protecting their best assets – employees and students.

My suggestions:

Review the weather more carefully and with a less than “positive’ eye. Take a drive to the edges of the country lines just to personally gauge the true road conditions. If schools and businesses around the state are closed, don’t let Cornell be the only hold out to stay open. It doesn’t make us look like the best and brightest.

Close more quickly.

Announce closure early.

Be lenient and pay staff who have delayed arrivals due to conditions beyond their control.

Apply pay equally for these special situations, regardless of whether the employee is staff/temp/faculty, benefits-eligible or not. If they got here and worked, that should be recognized.

And finally, when the State of New York and/or local counties and town have declared a state of emergency for no unnecessary travel, for pities sake -- please close Cornell!

Again, thank you for offering the opportunity to share my observations and suggestions.

114. Staff

First off it's just embarrassing that an organization the size and stature of Cornell University continues to struggle with what should be easily addressable, policy driven issues. It's not at all limited to snow days. In just the past year in my little corner of campus we have dealt with no standard operating procedure concerning vehicle use policies, pay for work over holiday periods, call in procedures, enforcement of existing policies, and the list goes on and on. From department to division, interpretation of and adherence to already existing policy is a free for all, let alone situations like snow days where guidelines are vague or non existent. I agree more work is needed, but a lot could be improved by simply enforcing current policies evenly across campus.

My biggest issue with the last two snow closures was that both times the decision was made mid day which meant thousands of employees now needed to drive home at the height of the storm. I would much rather see an early morning decision, stating the University is either open all day or closed all day. Individuals can then make their own decision on coming in or taking a personal day if they so choose. We all know we're not talking about a lot of storms, we're talking about huge heavily forecasted events. Everyone knew it would be a huge event the previous night, so the decision to wait until grounds could no longer keep up with it to close seems very shortsighted.

I know the other big issue was with how people were paid, or in some cases not paid, and how the information kept trickling out which ended up with some people being sent home before the option for them to stay and get paid premium time was even offered. Most Union temps lost a day and a half of wages while others were offered the ability to work if they wanted. Really Cornell! That's the best you can do for them? Certainly not well played, and I hope they get an apology and solid information on how this will be handled going forward.

115. Faculty

Thank you for your email and for asking for ideas and observations. I fully support the last two decisions to close the campus due to the storm. When Cornell does not close after storms, it is a hazard and puts many employees and students in danger.

The policy of remaining open after a bad storm, but telling employees to decide on their own if they should venture in to work, is not logical. Many Cornell employees who live outside of Ithaca in other small towns may decide to stay home on these bad days, leaving faculty members who brave the storm and students to walk through numerous uncleaned pathways. I have had to walk through many uncleaned walkways to try to make it to class, and this is a hazard for faculty members and students alike, which could possibly lead to law suits. On the other hand, if these employees who live outside of Ithaca do decide to come to work, they are placed in danger on the roads. If these employees have an automobile accident on the way to campus, it is essentially Cornell's fault since these employees would not have left their homes if the campus were closed. I think Cornell should make the decision to protect their employees, instead of passing the possible risks on to them. Faculty members feel a strong sense of duty to their students to show up if class is in session, and in my experience, many tend to go to class even when the weather is terrible.

In short, if Cornell can clean the walkways and parking areas, then remain open, if not, then please close the campus. This has been my main complaint in regards to Cornell remaining open. Class should not be in session if it is a hazard to walk from the car to the classroom.

116. Staff

Public schools include a certain number of snow days in the academic calendar. Why can't Cornell do the same? Granted, a snow day would still be disruptive, but at least there would be a basis for planning. Then folks on the shutdown team would have one less thing to worry about.

The current scheme, which, as far as I can tell after forty years of working at Cornell, is never to close until the sheriff closes the county roads. This is a terrible scheme, as recent events have shown. Wait until everyone gets to work, and then send them home under severely deteriorated conditions.

117. Staff

Regarding the last round of snow closure for the University, being a working road sergeant on the 3PM to 11PM shift, I was surprised to see the university decided to close the University at noon on the first day of the storm. It was well known a head of time the magnitude of the storm and better planning should have been put in place for the closure. I think this put undue pressure on the workers to have to risk the drive to work, only to have to risk a return home after a few hours. This also created great difficulty to some who relied on public transportation when TCAT pulled the buses from the roads. These employees were basically stranded here on Campus.

118. Faculty

Maybe we did not need to be as defensive, i.e., 1.5 days seem to be too much over my 35 winter experience at UIUC and Cornell. Thanks.

119. Staff

Thank you for allowing folks at Cornell to express themselves and for Cornell to consider re-thinking their procedures. Good idea given climate change resulting in more extreme weather and that Cornell works hard to be a very prepared institution.

It was not correct of Cornell, who rightly prides itself on great HR policies, to let people come into work when the storm was clearly coming, going to be bad, and Cornell “made” staff come into work, and then as it got worse told people they could go home in it again! (doesn’t make sense). Despite the fact that Cornell says in its messages sent out to employees to essentially “judge for yourself and stay safe.”

Could it be reversed? That Cornell declares a ½ day snow day in the morning (when it’s likely at it’s worst) and that staff know they could be called in to ‘re-open’ Cornell at noon or 1 o’clock if it is clear that the weather is getting better? In the announcement closing until noon or one, state that employees should check back at 11am to see if the University is re-opening. Then if by 10am it is clear the poor weather will continue all day, that the roads are bad still, then Cornell announces that the rest of the day it will be closed as well.

Either way you do it, folks with kids kept home due to school closings will have to stay home and take a vacation day or find someone to take the kids.

I looked outside, looked at the snow in my driveway and decided to take a half-day vacation off as my kids were at home and I didn’t want to drive in the weather; then Cornell decided to close, so I didn’t have to go in at all.

120. Staff

Thank you very much for asking for feedback. This sends a message to the staff and faculty: we care about your health!

My understanding is the current criterion for shutting Cornell down is that the highways are closed. Because so many staff and faculty travel some distances (some upwards of 1.5 hours) to get to school perhaps monitoring a wide swath of public school closures would be a good barometer for travel safety. If say 70% of schools are closed in the towns from which employees travel then Cornell closes, too. This would take some modeling and may result in more closed days, but when you prioritize health over showing up, employees are safer and not harboring resentment.

I think a change in language to the email sent to staff and faculty will also make a big difference. The email, though correct in facts, gives the impression that failing to show up to work when Cornell is not closed in inclement/dangerous weather is frowned upon. The messaging suggests Cornell’s attitude is “don’t show up at your own risk” when the real danger is driving in blizzard conditions.

121. Staff

An observation is that Cornell likes to wait until the last minute to close, or opens up only to close early, like what happened in this last blizzard. Cornell was one of the few places that didn't make the decision to close the night before this last snowstorm, making it difficult for families to find childcare because the schools were going to be closed but the adults might need to go to work.

Opening and then closing early makes it difficult for individuals commuting by bus because the closing of the University doesn't always coincide with the bus route schedules, stranding or delaying the individual.

And in the case where it's known that the storm will be bad (like the last one), opening and closing early forces employees to deal with 2 trips in the snow, where if the University just closed the night before, they wouldn't have to go out at all. In the last 20 years, I can recall this happening 2 other times, one time sending employees home just as the roads closed.

Perhaps a little less stoicism might be in order, or a published process for what meteorological conditions or reports will force a closure or delay would help.

122. Staff

If every school is closed in the county and we are having a blizzard, Cornell should not expect the students and faculty to drive on the roads. If the police says no unnecessary driving, we shouldn't be expected to drive in. Closing at 12:00 makes it more dangerous to get home even if able to get in in the first place. This is putting anyone that is driving in danger.

123. Staff

Thank you for eliciting our feedback.

The university has a reputation for not closing unless local roads close, but, there are times when that invokes more hardship than is necessary to the staff who need to keep the university running.

I understand not closing the night before, as practically all local school districts did, because the storm could of gone differently and a closure would have been unnecessary. The policy talks about making a decision by 6am in the morning, Could we of closed at that point, instead of waiting till people had arrived for the day?

It would be nice to know what the decision makers are thinking and what criteria they are using to make their decision. Maybe if we knew that this was being watched and what the chances were of a closure on the status page, that would have been helpful for some.

Personally, I called into work to say I'd work from home that morning and ended up working from home via my computer the whole two days, safe at home there was no reason not to work, even when the university closed. I worked with many other administrative people during that time to make sure pay would go through properly when we returned.

During the storm, after they switched from opening at 12noon to 4:30pm, I looked on the Cornell web site and still didn't see anything posted about it at the top level, I had to go to the operating status page.

I was making examples of how to enter time in our timekeeping system for this storm. I updated all the examples as soon as I heard about the change in opening time from my boss and arranged for communications to go up on our web site with a tech person, also working from home. This storm came at the tail end of a bi-weekly pay period. We moved the deadline for administrative folk by a half day to compensate for the closure.

There should be a way to update the top level web page to keep this emergency information easily viewable for all members of the Cornell community, even the ones who don't know about the operating status pages...

I was informed within my unit and department, and via a Cornell Alert that I have signed up for. So those channels worked for me.

Something that may not be part of your group, but, is necessary, is to have a consistent way of paying time worked during the university closure.

Various areas decided to pay slightly differently from policy. People can get easily confused and there were many questions. The policy discusses essential and non-essential personnel in terms of traveling into work and in terms of paying differently. We were told anyone working on campus should be paid as essential and not to bring those terms up. In a storm prior to this one, NYC made the determination that anyone working at the office should be considered essential. Some people asked if they were required to work at home, could they get extra pay like people who came in. (I don't know what the determination was on that) The policy should line up with how we are telling people to pay. There should be a FAQ page for University closing with all the examples published by labor relations and agreed to by all the various areas in campus with details when different for Campus, Geneva, Cooperative extension offices, NYC etc... Holiday has moved to full payment when it is worked in university policy, University closure could also give full payment when it is worked to be more straight forward. CALS decided to do that, since there was nothing setup to do it automatically, they ended up overpaying overtime in the week. The policy describes giving paid leave credit right now in addition to paying time worked at 1.5 base salary, it wasn't changed when our Holiday policy changed to full pay. I believe that should be reviewed going forward.

124. Staff

Thanks for looking for input from staff on the issue of snow days. In the past, Cornell has often stayed open until after the Sheriff has closed the roads and then closed, making egress to home problematic for a couple of reasons.

We don't get out ahead of the worst of the weather. What's the point of fancy forecasting and news networks if you don't take advantage of the advance warning?

When we do leave when the University closes, there's a heavy load as we all go at once which taxes already bad roads. And many of our secondary roads are near impassable. Last week I had difficulty getting up my road with 6+ inches of snow on it despite all wheel drive.

My understanding is that when the roads are closed, even though the Sheriff will let you pass to get to home, your car insurance may not be in force. So if you have an accident on roads worse than they would be if you were let go in a more timely fashion, you may not be covered for damage or injury. Does the University have some responsibility for putting a driver in that predicament?

Ithaca is at the bottom of some steep hills - if we wait till the storm has struck to try to pass though on the way home, some cars can't get up the hills. I passed at least two in that predicament on my way home last week. And in years past I have been stuck in town that way myself.

Historically, I've been stuck at Cornell twice back in 90s during those storms when the University closed late into the onset of the storm. Once I had to sleep at my desk, another time I was able to stay with friends in the city that I could walk to.

This last storm was better in that we got let go relatively early into the onset of the storm and I was able to get home and get snowed in there. It would have been better if we didn't have to fight our way in, only to turn around 4 hours later and fight our way home in worse weather. It would also have been better if we'd just been closed the next day from the start, not starting at noon, then delaying that till 4:30. Why can't we do something similar to the other colleges and schools so we're not always out of sync with them? I imagine this is even more important for parents who have to be at Cornell but the school for their kids is closed.

The other thing I think needs some consideration is that many of us can do a large portion of our work from a remote computer. We do this on the road, when we're at conferences, during travel to and from, and during a storm I see no reason why we can't simply let those who can work from home, do so. Some of us have jobs, or portions of our jobs, that need us to be on site - but if we do, we know that. But others who work mostly from our desktop should be able to decide if the risks of the weather make it more prudent to operate from home for a day or two without penalty

125. Faculty

Well, I had a final exam scheduled at 1 PM on the snow day so I was pretty frustrated when I got the announcement that we would shut down at noon. Having said that, by 3 PM the roads in Cayuga Heights were rather un-passable. It was probably the right call to shut down, even if it was being forced on us by the Sheriff's decision to close the roads. I am old school. Good snow tires and a trusty vehicle and snow is really just a nuisance. But, I have students in my class from Georgia and California who still haven't grasped the importance of buying snow tires (they will when they are fourth year veterinary students assigned to the clinics and on duty night and day).

I think you all had a tough call on this. The after effect, I had to give the lab exam scheduled for Tuesday afternoon over five time periods on Thursday and Friday, allowing for the students' responsibilities in other students on those days. My colleague brilliantly transformed our written exam into an on-line e-test that the students took at their convenience (with the Honor Code keeping all honest). So it worked out but it was not easy. The NWS forecasts didn't help you or us very much, either. They were only forecasting 6 inches in advance of this storm. Stuff happens. Frankly, you might opt for a "rolling close" of the University when possible. The traffic right at noon was lousy. If we could have bought another hour (even until 1 PM) we might have gotten some of the students (who were already in the building) in to sit for their test. They were pretty frustrated. It is not a perfect situation.

126. Staff

I realize it is expensive for the University to shut down, but it is very frustrating when the conditions are so poor, and you expect employees to risk their safety to get to work. Having worked at Cornell for 27 years, I've learned to just automatically take a vacation day, because I know the University will wait until the last minute to shutdown, and I don't want to get stuck on campus because the roads are closed.

This past storm the conditions were poor very early in the morning, and the forecasts all pointed to a very significant and long-lasting snow event. I would love to see the University follow suit with the rest of schools in the area, and shutdown early so that non-essential employees do not need to travel.

127. Staff

I've been here 40 winters and I've **never** figure-out CU's 'policy' on closing because of snow storms. It seems to be based on some odd and proud mantra that "Cornell never closes and march on" regardless of what other institutions, agencies, organizations, and business have decided around us. Closing at noon the first day and then waffling the next day? Give me a break, someone should be released to seek employment elsewhere. Profs simply exercised good judgement based on real weather facts, considered their safety and that of their students and TAs, and canceled classes. Faculty have the option to work from home while snowed in. Well, not staff as they had to risk life and limb coming in or take a personal/vacation day and stay home. Those assuming the risk had to return to the roads at noon. On the second day my admin assistant colleague took the bus from T-burg to get to campus by noon (yes she's dedicated), only to turn around and bus-back home, After digging a path to my study, I worked at home.

One question for those in 'control' -- What responses would you have for a family whose mother, spouse, or student died in a car accident trying to drive to campus? I sincerely hope these decisions are not financial motivated. We are better than that! We are Cornell in rural Upstate NY where weather happens and we care about the **entire** campus community.

128. Staff

I'm unsure of the % of employees who live out of Tompkins county, but I think it's a lot. I am one of those, and when my county closes the roads but Tompkins doesn't, I'm unsure what to do. Usually I think it's not worth it and just stay home.

Perhaps if the rule was based on where you live, rather than Cornell's location.

129. Staff

It's been my observation over the years that CU always closes just a bit too late, and dumps hundreds of staff people on roads that are closed / not plowed, and to buses that are no longer running. I have the privilege of working from home as needed so this is no longer my issue, but it seems to me that you should err on the side of caution / safety and concern for the well-being of your staff members.

130. Faculty

Canceling classes is a real disruption to courses, often requiring then makeup lectures which create more challenges.

Making a proactive statement so that staff are able to safely go home (especially since many live far away) is good. But perhaps consider making class cancellation an option per course based on faculty circumstances. Faculty could assess their own ability to hold class ... walking in from Collegetown or Cayuga Heights is not an issue though driving from Lansing may be inappropriate. With essentially every class having a blackboard site, statement could simply be "students should check their course websites or blackboard for status of lectures and labs".

Fortunately this only happens once every twenty years so maybe not a big issue. But I'm still trying to recover from cancelled lectures and labs, and I was crazy enough to be in during most of the time.

Opening again at 4:30 was nice and appreciated with respect to lab course timing. Similarly, appreciate relaxing the rules for exams and (to the Associate Provost) extending the drop date for students.

131. Faculty

Just a few thoughts from the perspective of a Cortland resident and Cornell professor:

Cornell has a reputation for being cavalier about closure. I know there are students who live on campus and require service, but that is no less true for Ithaca College, Cortland State, and TC3. When those schools and all other local primary and secondary schools announce a closure *the night before* a storm, Cornell would be wise to set aside its usual pride and follow suit. (Alternatively, local residents should put pressure on the Ithaca, Dryden, and Lansing governments to close all of your surrounding roads, which would accomplish the same thing!)

The lower-paid employees at Cornell are those who commute the farthest and put themselves at greatest risk. (I am an exception.) Our janitors and lower-level administrators and other support staff live in Groton, Cortland, Horseheads: am I telling you anything you don't already know? Keep them in mind when you decide to close a campus only in the *middle* of a work day. They all had to schlep to work on Tuesday the 14th, only to be sent home in near-white-out conditions. A skeleton crew, I know, will be required in the event of a closure, but you could take a lot of unnecessary vehicles (and lives) off the roads more readily by an early, honest, better-safe-than-sorry closure.

Rethink, as well, the mid-day reopening. Announcing it a mere handful of hours in advance seemed unnecessarily last-minute, and 4:30 is a confusing time for everyone. I understand that some preliminary exams and classes are held at night (my class meets at 7:30 on Wednesdays; I cancelled it) but encouraging faculty to find ways to assess students during their regularly scheduled class times should be preferable to putting lives at risk through an ill-timed reopening.

Above all, please try to value your employees' safety more than the efficient running of your institution. Cornell is very good at lip-service to ideals; it is much less good at fostering practices that make employees feel that their lives--more than their labor--are worth something.

132. Staff

I would like to put in that if a closure is extend to last until the "End of the business day" like we did from noon to 4:30pm it really should be closed for the entire day. The evening classes that may exist after 4:30p or that overlap create a situation in which there has been no support in their rooms nor on campus and leaves them unprepared for evening classes.

133. Faculty

I thought the snow day was great. My students slept! I did research! No one drove in unsafe conditions! It was nice to have an unplanned holiday; it was more effective at encouraging rest and relaxation than planned holidays. I wondered: why not *plan* to have a snow-day a year or so? Ie, plan an unplanned holiday; build it into the calendar. If no severe snow happened, we could have a sun-day instead to make up for it!

134. Staff

Through my own error in judgement not to leave immediately when the university closed I was stuck on campus when tcat shut down. It would have been nice to have some warning that tcat might shut down and so if you could encourage them to communicate better with their riders it wd be appreciated. Some of their drivers were disappointed to see their administrators out cross country skiing during their shut down. Their smaller vehicles should be equipped w snow tires. I walked to wegmans and got picked up from there. Campus police answered their phones but were unapologetic about having no plan for those left on campus by tcat. Well, worse than unapologetic. But all turned out ok. Now I know that when the campus closes one really should leave. Everyone in my lab just continued working; it was a good day to get stuff done!

135. Staff

Specific steps should be taken to either allow administrators/building managers to override the automatic locks and secure the buildings or managers should station people at unlocked entrances to ensure security.

By happenstance, I was in a backroom of the []the morning Cornell was closed. I intercepted two people who entered the [] and in trying to find someone to help them had started to explore the first floor office area. They had no sinister intentions, but this illustrates the need to address security.

136. Staff

During the recent storm, it was problematic that the university opened in the morning, and then told us all it would be closing at noon. This kind of decision puts people at risk who have driven in from more rural areas under some duress and then must return in poor driving conditions. It is better and safer to close for the entire day.

137. Staff

Thank you for this invitation to provide feedback! I appreciate the difficulty of your task and your diligent attention to it.

It would make sense to me that we would follow school and city precautions as well as our own judgment, and state-of-emergency declarations may provide another obvious guide. This particular storm felt difficult because of our differing from the aligned message from all those sources. I'd also love to see more flexibility in supporting people using their own judgment about if it's safe to get to work...I had colleagues who saw in Monday's email a need to take earned time if it was unsafe for them to get to work, which implies the university isn't (literally) invested in their safety. The biggest challenge I saw personally was people who relied on infrequent bus service needing to wait at work for long after the office was finally closed, which was a problem unique to that kind of half-day situation.

Overall, I think that snow days are a way of honoring the safety and value of employees, and I'd love to see Cornell err on the side of closing in extreme circumstances like these. Thanks again for the opportunity to offer these comments, and thanks for your commitment to our common good.

138. Staff

I work at Cornell Health, on the front lines, and a big thing for us is the number of students who wanted health excuses to missed classes and exams. This does not relate directly to snow closing, but quite a few appointments we had to cancel were related to this.

As you should know, except for significant illness we do not give out excuses, and our policy is clearly stated on our website. From the number of requests we get for excuses, our faculty are not as aware of this as they should be. It would be helpful if our policy were brought to the attention of faculty on a regular, perhaps yearly basis. This was done during the H1N1 pandemic of 2008, and I think it was helpful. I am very proud of our medical and support staff during the storm.

139. Faculty

I thought that it was absolutely appropriate for Cornell to close during the recent snow storm. However, I feel that Cornell was too slow to respond to the emerging situation. In my opinion the university should have closed much earlier on the first day. I had technicians who live about an hour away drive in to work--in unsafe conditions--only to have to return home a couple of hours later. This was a waste of time and an unnecessary risk. The disruption and uncertainty of the bus schedules also generated a lot of angst among people. I also feel that the university opened before the roads were truly safe to drive. I appreciate that the operation of the campus will always require some people to work during these conditions, but I don't think that the university did all that it should have done to proactively safeguard the students, faculty, and staff during severe weather.

140. []**141. Staff**

Not a good idea to ask Cornell population to come to campus with these kind of weather conditions, then close campus at noon with the worst yet to-come ! The trip home was the worst and much more dangerous. We were all lucky we didn't lose power !

142. Staff

It does not make sense to drag employees to work through snow when the forecast is for lots of snow and then to close Cornell at 12 noon after the employees bust their chops to get here and risk their lives to get here so that employees have to go through more snow to go home...

You should be smarter than that...and close early on such days saving lives..

143. Staff

Given the rarity of snowdays -- it would have been useful to have been told that all employees are asked to stop working -- my office's employees opted to complete their duties from home and we are stuck paying them overtime -- if the announcement of a snowday had just included some language about how all employees are required to stop working, or something, I would have appreciated it.

144. Faculty

It seems to me that a total shutdown is not necessary if public transportation is running and buildings/classrooms are accessible. Teaching functions could still be kept while other functions can be left to the decision of individual units.

145. Staff

It made little sense to close 2 half days, since that forced everyone to be out on the roads both days.

146. Staff

I'm glad you're considering a change to the policy. It seems like there is a mindset in place that Cornell is too good for snow days and in this case I would argue Cornell stayed open when it was clearly a danger to do so. I believe even the mail was not delivered on those days. As a quick fix, perhaps Cornell should look to the post office for guidelines? If the post office is closed, then Cornell should close too.

In the future, I hope that the mindset can shift from "Cornell never closes (regardless how it affects the safety of faculty/students/staff)" to something more humane, such as "Cornell cares about the safety of its faculty, students, and staff and will close if it makes sense."

147. Faculty

Thank you for this opportunity to respond. Literally, everyone was aware that the heart of this last storm would take place during the day on Tuesday. When such storms have begun and there is general consensus that severe weather will continue throughout a school day, it is not only reasonable, but decent and compassionate to close the university. I struggled to get to campus on Tuesday to teach my classes, only to have them both cancelled at the last minute. Then, I struggled to get back home. I know of staff and colleagues who were stranded, unable to get home. Such hardship results from poor policy and reveals an employer unsympathetic to the critical safety of its employees. Many feel that the university holds back until the last minute in order to force salaried employees to take sick or personal days if they cannot make it in, thereby retaining productivity at the expense of those employees.

The Cornell Alert articulating policy was nearly cynical in its vagueness. In essence the message said "don't take unnecessary risks, but we expect you to be at work." Really?!!

With this message I encourage a serious rethinking of campus policy and its attendant notifications.

148. Staff

I thought it was great that the university closed. Safety first!

149. Staff

Over 31 years commuting to the Ithaca campus from Horseheads in Chemung County via route 13, then up the hill, there have been snows that take two hours to get home, most of the difficulty in Ithaca. If schools are

closed, or releasing early, it makes for a laborious trip because roads are not maintained as they otherwise would be.

I watch the weather carefully to decide whether to make the trip, influenced by the level of flex to work from home per my supervisor - had many over these years running the gamut from no flex to very reasonable.

Even though many employees are non essential personnel in the midst of significant snow starting, many of them come to campus because they are in a position that requires their presence in the office as opposed to flexplace, don't have much leave time to cover their pay, or perceived inflexibility of the supervisor about using leave time for part or whole of the day.

So when non essential personnel come to campus during a snow event, there are varying circumstances under which work can or cannot still be accomplished.

That said, University closing is a big deal, with labor losses; students are missing instruction.

Observations and Ideas:

From the standpoint of safety, travel affecting staff, faculty and commuting students should be the main concern. This includes vehicle and walking mobility safety. In fast-developing or prolonged snows, walking campus streets and pathways is not safe.

These snows are infrequent and student instruction can flex to accommodate both driving and walking safety.

In my experience, the University has rarely shut down but when they do it has been when people are already "stuck" on campus, facing a prolonged and unsafe trip to get to where they want and need to be.

Weather data should be the main consideration as well as the standard operating hours for offices and classes, for example 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monitoring and confirming on- and off-campus resources to handle the event is very important. Monitoring and perhaps consulting with other educational institutions in the area about the event (and apart from the event, their processes for arriving at decisions) would broaden the thinking behind a decision to remain open or to close.

The geographical scope of a weather event should also weigh in - the larger the scope, the more impact on the University affecting personnel it relies on to function in all jobs.

Regarding the snow event that just happened, it seems that the decision to close was made at the point that conditions were unsafe for vehicle and walking mobility and that is not prudent. Weather data alone should have provided enough information to not open on day one of the storm, much less the other check points. It was well predicted to have significant impact on mobility, and very large in geographical scope.

It can be more than snow that creates these unsafe conditions. I recall when the Southern Tier was flooded (rain and snow melt in January some years ago), going to work, and being released but having to drive through flooded roads in Ithaca, being detoured because route 13 was closed, finding flooding on the last access road to route 13, and driving through it (after seeing a few other vehicles crossing) to make the last leg of the trip home. At that time there was a state of emergency in several counties.

So thankful for your reach out, truly.

150. Staff

I don't have any suggestions for things to do differently in the future. Rather, I just wanted to say that I thought the decision to close the University was a good one--appropriate, timely, and well-handled.

151. Faculty

The university often stays open when all area high schools are closed. The reason I recall is that most students live on campus so they should not be impacted by dangerous travel conditions. As an instructor that commutes, I always cancel class when all the K-12 schools around me close due to my unsafe travel conditions. This is both for my safety and my commuting students safety. Instructors and students with school age kids are also scrambling to react and are best served to decide to make their plans earlier and independently of what/when Cornell makes its decision.

I recommend that if all/most of the area high schools close, Cornell closes as well, at the same time.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and for the tough decisions you make each winter.

152. Staff

I realize that travel circumstances (and work responsibilities) differ a lot between students, teaching faculty, and university staff. Therefore one uniform instruction on weather related attendance may not work, BUT it is really counterproductive to close the university AFTER people have arrived at work. We have people coming to work from at least as far as Bath, NY. If the weather is potentially going to create a university closure, commuters from out of town should be instructed very explicitly what to do BEFORE they leave home.

153. Staff

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this. Closing the University due to dangerous weather conditions is a tough call. Some staff members commute from far away, where travel conditions can be much worse than at the Ithaca campus. Topography "out in the hills" can exacerbate travel problems and hazards during bad weather. A substantial number of staff are essential for safe and effective operations.

The recent closure seemed well done and appropriate. We've had higher snow amounts with high winds before, but this storm was more intense than other storms in memory, outstripping capacity to clear the roads quickly. At our high elevation in southeastern Tompkins County we had 24 inches of snow and the drifting was also a problem. I spent most of Wednesday out in the wind clearing my own driveway and walkways, then drove to my mother's house to help her. I would guess that many essential staff were doing similar things that

day. This is work that must be done, and the quicker the better. If things are not safe at home, this too endangers staff and their families.

Perhaps the advanced and detailed weather forecasting that we all enjoy these days helped the closure decision process. I'd say, "Well done" this time.

154. Staff

I live in Candor NY and have a 25 mile (one way) drive into work. I had elected to stay at home on Tuesday the beginning of the storm because I did not want to get stranded at Cornell and drive in a blizzard. I had to use my vacation time until the university closed at noon. I did the same during the blizzard of 93.

I am disappointed that Cornell did not learn from the blizzard of 93. Staff and students were stranded at Cornell and some slept on cots in Barton Hall. Buses were discontinued and the university closed during the storm. Which meant the staff were released on roads that were barely passable.

The same happened this time.

When area universities and schools are closing around the campus this should have been an indicator to Cornell that they should do the same. Not only do you have staff driving to and from Cornell but you have students that live off campus that drive as well.

I did appreciate that we were notified in ample time that university closed. In bad weather we would have to leave our homes at least an hour and half to make it to work on time.

The fact that you reached out to the CU community for feedback, makes me feel confident that your team will come up with a better way to determine when to close the campus.

155. Staff

What a lot of responsibility!

I would have closed the entire day on that Tuesday. Cornell closed at noon. My husband and I work at Cornell, living 10 miles away. My husband went in. It was a bit of stressful drive. I stayed home with our public school daughter. There is my input! Thanks for asking!

156. Staff

If the university knows that the weather is going to be horrible, why put your employees in the position of having to make the difficult decision of choosing whether they should be braving dangerous weather and icy roads? I am very happy the university decided to close at noon a few weeks ago, but I had been at work since 8 am that morning and the roads were absolutely horrendous when my boss told me to leave at 10:45. I live in Dryden and a 20-25 minute drive took me around 45-50 minutes because route 79 hadn't been plowed. It was one of the scariest trips I ever took.

PLEASE choose to keep the University closed from morning the next time and avoid having people make the dangerous choice to drive on unplowed and unsafe roads.

157. Faculty

My only thought is it would seem better to shut down at the beginning of the day, though I know sometimes it can't be helped. Many of us trekked in only for our classes to be cancelled once we arrived. I don't have kids in school, but I imagine that was a problem for many. But mostly, it seems like staff travel in is potentially treacherous. In the email before the shutdown, I think it said the campus was expected to be open because most students live on campus. That may be true, but not many staff members live on campus. Plus, campus is big and not easy to navigate in bad weather. It seems it took quite a while for the grounds crew to catch up, which is understandable because it's a big campus and the snow was constant, but that makes it hard to get around.

In all honestly, I cynically think the campus was closed down only because the roads were to be closed. I walk, so it doesn't directly affect me, but I have colleagues that drive in from some distance and they were struggling to get home before the roads closed. I also know of a few graduate students who were stranded in Ithaca because of the road shutdown, including one separated from her two little kids.

158. Faculty

Thanks for the offer of considering feedback. I've taught in several states where snow days always play a part (Idaho, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and here).

In those places, faculty and staff always appreciated it when the admin folks, when making a snow day decision, took several factors into consideration:

Many faculty and staff (including food services and janitorial) don't live anywhere near campus. Is it dangerous for them on country roads to drive in? If they get in to town, can they get back home to care for their kids and elders in emergencies?

If the city shuts down its offices, shouldn't we follow suit?

Are all of the schools for kids closed? If so, that has a severe impact on the lives of working adults if they are required to drive their kids to some kind of emergency daycare/camp, then to work, then back to pick up the kids, then home in terrible weather.

Many of our faculty are disabled or hampered in their mobility in some way or another, and they are often unsure of their footing. Is the campus well cleared enough for those with canes, wheelchairs, and other assistive devices to get to their obligations on time? Students, too? (I'm able bodied, and the sidewalks in the Engineering Quad took me down twice.)

Are classes absolutely needing to be face-to-face, especially in this day and age? Can we offer or suggest that classes have online backup plans for such days? With Zoom, Blackboard, and the myriad of other tools available to us, I feel the admin could rely on the good sense of the faculty to adjust to online plans for emergency days.

Thanks again for taking in some ideas! It's much appreciated.

159. Staff

I think Shutdown is a good way when the weather is bad. That is really related to the safety and the life. So when we get alarm of bad weather, please shutdown the campus.

160. Faculty

Bringing staff and faculty in for the morning and then closing at noon is a real problem. Many who don't drive their own car to Cornell, especially those who rely on TCAT, were stranded when the county closed the roads mid-afternoon. If there's a question of whether the University will be able to stay open for the entire day, I firmly believe it should just close for the day.

161. Faculty

It seems to me that the problem wasn't whether or not to close the university, which is a prudent measure when the county closes the roads, but how to handle the evening prelims. For that, a more radical solution is in order: get rid of them. They are an anachronism that the university has outgrown. Invest in digital testing technologies, and other alternatives to in-class testing. You were aggressive in re-structuring the calendar. Do the same with evening prelims.

162. Faculty

Middle of the day closures and openings creates havoc and angst.

Anytime the public school districts close, Cornell should do the same. The issue is not with the students, but faculty and staff who have to travel to get to campus and more importantly cannot find child care when their children are off

163. Staff

Close at noon....open at 2:30 ?....come on people, 90% of your support staff have at least a 35 min. commute to the campus

Please keep that in mind....the only thing that must be supported is research....the rest can withstand a shift change.

Understand that Cornell Employees are here for the long haul and want to do the right thing more than not....safety is paramount at are workplace

Why would we put that in jeopardy off the clock and what message does it send as an employer.

164. Staff

When they re-do the Academic calendar, build some kind of "snow-day" allowance into it.

Consider a "delayed opening" for storms that start between midnight and 6:00 am, where you're not sure of the track or snowfall amounts. Obviously you can't make the early morning classes take the brunt of some policy like

this (unlike school districts that have a '2 h. delayed opening') but maybe a full ½ day might be something that would work. The delay might allow roads to be cleared better, and if the storm severity isn't too bad and they can stay up with the clearing, afternoon operations could proceed. During Stella, by mid-morning, everyone in our group that had made it in (a number had already decided to work from home) were sending out e-mails that they were leaving by noon, even before the closing announcement came out.

I was at Cornell for a period in the 1980's and there was a storm that started about 8:30 or 9:00, and finally an "early close" announcement went out at about 4 pm. That was WAY too late. It was dark by the time I got to the "B" lot and everybody was trying to move at the same time. Didn't work. Took 50+ minutes to get to Varna... So, have fixed decision times that allow people to get home, and don't keep waiting for more data.

165. Staff

My only comment is we knew the snow wasn't going to stop all day on Tuesday but the University stayed open and closed at noon, right at the worst of the snow. Even if the roads aren't too terrible in the morning it was for sure going to get more treacherous throughout the day (both days).

166. Staff

Cornell has quite a few (most actually) staff who do not live close to Cornell, I myself drive in from Montour Falls which is about a 40 minute drive in good weather. I don't think it's fair to employees to have to use vacation or sick time if we feel that the roads are not safe to drive to work, just because most of the student live on campus. Quite often when we are forecasted to get a decent amount of snow, I end up driving through two or three different weather patterns.

I think if I feel that it's not safe for me to drive in, I should be allowed to use paid leave instead of vacation or sick time. I didn't come those two days of the storm Stella, because it wasn't safe to do so. If I had driven in, it would have probably taken me at least twice as long to get here, then I would have had to turn around in just a few hours to go home, which would have probably taken me twice as long to get home.

It also would have been nice to get the notice that the university had decided to close for the second day instead of starting at noon a bit earlier. Since I do have to drive in from a distance, I was already outside cleaning off my car and getting ready to leave before 10:00am. Luckily I came back into the house to grab my things, and heard my phone, which was already in my bag, so I saw the alert before I headed out.

167. Staff

When mornings are as bad as they were the day Cornell closed AND knowing conditions would get worse throughout the day, Cornell should not have opened at all. By having employees come in to work, Cornell puts us in more danger by closing mid-day forcing us to drive home in worse conditions. Even IC was closed. Cornell needs to take roads conditions more serious, especially when the forecast is predicting continued declining driving conditions throughout the day. You have staff coming from so many different counties, some a great distance away.

168. Staff

If there is a University closure near a pay period close it would be helpful to share the time off code(s) that need to be used for the closed time in the announcement.

169. Staff

It may be helpful for others, like myself, who are new to Cornell University to know what the current processes are to help make it more efficient.

170. Staff

I am a bus rider from downtown right now, but I plan on buying a house in the surrounding areas within the next few months. I know I am not the only person with concerns about the shutdown days, but I would like to think that we could begin erring on the side of caution when it comes to the safety of our community's Staff and Faculty members.

I believe that the University **should** have been closed the whole of the first day of the snowstorm. The drive in was not the easiest for many staff and some faculty, but the drive home at noon was horrendous for all. I take a bus home and my 5 minute ride took over an hour due to limited visibility and ditched cars. I couldn't have conceived the risk of driving in that weather.

It's especially concerning that we didn't close when all other colleges and universities within a 100 mile radius had closed the night before. I know that these decisions are not easy to make. Regardless, this decision showed a lack of compassion for the safety of valuable members of the Cornell community.

I'm not suggesting that we close for every snowflake, but rather, remain vigilant and observant in the surrounding school closures. Some information I might use to decide on a University closure would be the following:

Current snowfall of over 8" overnight in the surrounding area

Over 60% of other higher educational closures in the surrounding 50 mile area

Estimated snowfall amount over 2" per hour for a duration longer than 4 hours

Significant snowfall (over 8 inches) predicted for longer than an 8 hour period between 6am and 6pm

I would say that if three of the above are true, then it would be worth exploring the option of closing early, starting late, or full shutdown.

I hope this was helpful, and I appreciate the ability to voice my concern.

171. Staff

I think we really need to start with the attitude that since most students live on campus we do not need to close due to weather.

Most students do live on campus, but most faculty and staff do not. Without them there is no class so forcing them to brave the weather to come in so students don't lose a day is a bit ridiculous.

Roads were forecast to get worse throughout the day so remaining open was dangerous. Closing at noon only put many people on the road during the worst part of the storm.

I don't expect closure for every bad snow day, but in this instance it was warranted. Syracuse University even closed beginning of day when the weather was forecast to be worse further south than where they are located.

I think discussion with the experts at the DPW Thompsons County is probably where to start during weather like this in deciding to close or not.

172. Staff

I was already in transit to Cornell when I finally got the notification that university would be closed on Wednesday, the 2nd snow day.

It would be nice to know when to expect such a closing notification.

173. Staff

Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to give our feedback for snow days. I think the university should avoid half days at all cost b/c when there are exams, this is very difficult. For example, a professor I support was able to give her morning section their exam but not the afternoon section which in turn gave the afternoon section more time to study and increased the risk of students talking about the contents of the exam and those who haven't taken it yet getting the advantage. Half days are just very messy. I also do not believe the University closes as much as it should. I realize the students don't drive so they can get here safely but faculty and staff also make up much of this university and many times are in true danger trying to make it to work. As long as the University is open, we will try to make it. I'm not saying close as often as the local public schools do but I am asking that whoever makes these decisions take the faculty and staff and their commutes into consideration. For example, Tuesday morning during Stella, many people travelled in in horrible conditions and then had to turn around and travel home at noon in horrible conditions. The University should have closed from the get go. Please take us into consideration more often!

174. Staff

I live in Cortland, park in Dryden and ride the T-Cat bus in from there. I came in on Tuesday with the impending storm lurking and getting worse as predicted. I have to be honest. We spent the better part of the morning trying to decide what time we should all plan on leaving to get home safely. Then came the news that Cornell was closing at noon, and re-opening at noon the following day. Wednesday morning I spent the better part of the morning trying to decide whether or not to go in and risk life and vehicle. After I had decided that I would attempt to come in, it was announced that Cornell would open at 4:30. Not closing in a timely fashion created a lot of stress for me, as I am sure it did especially for those trying to figure out day care for their children.

I understand that there are times when the weather forecast is wrong, but this storm was vast and headed straight for us. It would have made sense in this case to give employees a heads up (night before in both cases) to be able to plan and reduce stress.

175. Staff

Thanks for soliciting feedback on snow days. I think that it is time to do that. I have been here since 1985 and no one in Cornell admin has asked for worker perspectives on snow days.

I think that employee safety and well-being is paramount. During my time in Ithaca, Cornell has traditionally tried to stay open regardless of how nasty the weather has been. If the county closes its roads then they will shut down. Otherwise, it has been business as usual. There have been occasions when Cornell will close at mid – day and that leaves your employees with the unenviable position of trying to safely get home when the weather is at its worst.

I suggest that the University commit to closing before most workers arrive. With today's enhanced connectivity it is easy to "get the word out". I did appreciate seeing a "Cornell alert" on the subject prior to the weather event.

I understand that closure has an impact on classes, especially if it's cancelling a day's worth of lab classes and making all of them up would be difficult. However, we are in central NY and we do get winter storms and there has to be some wiggle room for unexpected weather.

Ithaca College and TC3 were closed on Tuesday (3/14/17) morning.

"If the university remains open in adverse weather, even when a county or municipality makes an announcement to "avoid unnecessary travel" (travel for work is considered necessary travel), faculty, administrators and staff should make reasonable efforts to maintain their regular work schedules".

Several of my fellow Cornell employees took this statement to mean that they needed to come in at any cost and it generated a lot of negative discussion with respect to the University's caring about worker safety. One of my colleagues who lives in another county said that he once was not able to get in because roads in "his " county were closed, but Cornell was open because Tompkins county roads were open. His supervisor was not happy that he could not make it in. I think that there needs to be a little more understanding from management on the dynamics of bad weather.

Where I live, once the public schools close the frequency of plowing diminishes and the road conditions deteriorate. These things need to be considered.

176. Staff

I think because most students and faculty live within walking/biking/bus distance of campus, the most emphasis is placed on if those methods of commuting are feasible during a storm. I feel more consideration needs to be given to those employees that drive a significant distance to work (I walk ~2 miles so this is not applicable to me). These employees, generally support staff, are often considered 'essential' and thus not exempt from travel warnings, or even closures, and it seems often to put them in a dangerous position of traveling during extremely inclement weather.

I appreciate that it is a significant, and expensive, decision to close Cornell, however I also feel it is essential to act in the very best interests of the staff that keep the university running.

177. Staff

Thanks for soliciting feedback. I think Cornell's snow-day dysfunction has hurt the reputation with staff for many years if not decades. A slow or non-response to the obvious heavy snow sends a message, loud and clear, that Cornell values loss-time pay more than staff safety. I don't think this is the case, but it's hard to deny the take away for many people. I have always thought it more a result of too many decision makers involved.

The response to the last snowstorm was much better in my opinion. A good example of adequate response is our neighbors up the hill, Ithaca College. They seem to have far less trouble making a decision on closing school. Here are some things I believe or have observed:

Many staff live great distances from Cornell. I work with people that commute from Mexico NY and near Scranton PA ! With this in mind one of the most valuable changes to improve the policy is "quick response / decision" even if that means you sometimes get it wrong. Cornell has the resources to "suck it up" monetarily for the occasional close call, Remember the weather / closing policy can never be perfect, but it is far better to err on the side of closing / safety and I think the benefit will be higher moral and increased productivity during the time we are open.

If the state or county have closed the roads or issued "no unnecessary travel" alert that is a "no brainer" in my opinion, close and send people home or don't open at all. There are staff such as myself designated "essential" that can travel in, if we are able, to respond to emergencies. In my +16 yrs. Here I can vouch that it has almost never been necessary from a facility maintenance perspective as heavy snow isn't usually accompanied by extreme low temperatures. Extreme temperatures are much more likely to cause problems.

Many snowstorms response can be handled by a delayed opening of several hours, giving people like myself time to shovel out and drive carefully without facing a penalty. You may not be aware that staff, especially union staff, can face disciplinary consequences for being late to punch in or not coming in even if they find it impossible. Closing / delaying can give managers support for doing the right thing in valuing safety over metrics.

Another suggestion is follow the crowd. If the bulk of business, schools and universities are closing don't be the one lone holdout. Crowd sourcing works for this as most things. Cornell's reputation will only be enhanced by putting staff, faculty and students safety at the top of the list. Remember conditions can be vastly different in parts of the county and surrounding area. Rain here can be blizzard conditions in Summerhill only ten miles away.

Thanks for taking an interest in this,

178. Staff

Perhaps we could have a two-hour delay like the elementary and secondary schools do. That way if Cornell ends up being shut down for the day it would save students, faculty, and staff from coming to campus and then having to leave when the conditions are worsening.

179. Staff

A few observations re: 2017 snow days:

There was no update on the website on the 2nd day until late morning. The content from Day 1 read something like, “we will revisit whether or not Cornell will be closed beyond 12pm in the morning,” and though I checked several times throughout the morning of Day 2 there was no update like “in review” or something to suggest to employees that Cornell is looking at the weather and is in the process of making a decision.

Along those lines, had the decision been to reopen at 12, a confirmation message would be nice (maybe this would have happened, anyway?).

The message about closing came out pretty late for employees that bus-in or drive from distant locations; I live in Brooktondale which has limited bus service and it would have been nice to know earlier if Cornell was closing or not (I recognize that there are a lot of moving pieces to keep track of – that’s why my #1 piece of feedback is to communicate with the community about where you currently are in the process of making a decision. Transparency here can help people plan a lot better.).

180. Staff

I am very appreciated that Cornell decided to close all day on the second day of the storm. However, I do believe that strong consideration should have been made to close the first day as well. Those making the decision need to do a reality check that a good portion of your lower income staff travel to Cornell every day from distances 30 miles or farther. That first day quite a few of them most likely risked their safety making it back home that day when the university decided to close at 12 noon. I do realize that sometimes the weather man isn’t always right and it is hard to determine the seriousness of a storm. However, I do believe it was pretty apparent that morning that this storm had shift farther inland and we were going to be greatly impacted from it.

181. Staff

Perhaps when every school district in Tompkins county and every school district in counties surrounding Tompkins county announce that schools are closing, the day before, a storm of epic proportions is 100% guaranteed to hit us, Cornell University should not wait until the last minute to announce that it is closing too.

And, if Cornell university is going to close, updating the website, sending out an Email and updating the telephone recording, in the early morning, say before 6 AM would be nice.

Getting a phone call at 9AM after I have arrived from my 30 mile drive here, is a little late.

Channel 32 on Time Warner Cable, now Spectrum, is the Weather Channel. They seem to be accurate in their forecasts.

182. Staff

I received the email regarding feedback on the recent shut down procedures during the storm. I have a suggestion that I’d like to share.

I live in Whitney Point which is in Broome County (and a different snow band). We were under a State of Emergency/Travel Ban which means even if I was crazy enough to attempt driving to Cornell I could have gotten a ticket because I'm not an emergency/essential employee. So I had to use ½ day of vacation/PDL on Tuesday before the university shut down at 12pm. I feel that if an employee lives in a county or drives through a county where there is a State of Emergency/Travel Ban then we should not have to use our personal time or leave. The university should realize that not all employees can afford or want to live in Ithaca and many support staff like myself live many towns away and travel is not always as easy as it is in Tompkins County.

183. Staff

I wanted to throw a few cents into the snow day discussion. I commute about 35-40 min each way to Cornell every day. I ended up calling in on the 14th because of the storm's growing intensity. I noticed that other colleges around here (SUNY Cortland, Ithaca) announced their closings on TV and stated "essential staff report". They closed all day Tuesday and Wednesday. I feel like Cornell should have closed earlier on Tuesday-the storm was atrocious, and the forecasts were calling for this by 5-6am Tuesday morning. I feel like Cornell holding out to call a snow day was a little dangerous. I feel that in order to determine if a snow day should be determined, the amount of employee commuters (20 min or more to work) should be taken into consideration. I understand it is a lot of work to shut down Cornell, but when a storm this dangerous comes along (which gratefully is not really that often) Cornell needs to be more aware of the weather.

184. Faculty

I am in charge of a lab course. We teach lab sections Tuesday – Friday afternoons each week of the semester. I would have GREATLY appreciated an EARLIER decision on the closure on Tuesday and on the extension of the closure on Wednesday! The announcement of the closure on Tuesday came only about 3 hours before the students in the Tuesday lab sections were due to begin their labs. I had to do some extreme scrambling to track down the TAs who were to teach and talk to the lab technician who preps the live materials for these labs and re-schedule make-up labs for Wednesday and Thursday NIGHT. After all of this I still had to notify the students about what was happening (thank you Blackboard)! I was handed the same problem on Wednesday when the closure was extended from noon until 4:30pm! Again, an EARLIER decision would have been very helpful!

185. Staff

I appreciate that the university closed, and I also deeply appreciate the essential staff and AAD staff who worked through the storm in dining halls, clearing snow, in the health center, and for Giving Day.

I've been at Cornell as a student from 1993-97 and as a staff member from 2001-present, so I've seen my share of storms. This storm was predicted, the governor declared a state of emergency, and schools in about a 100 mile radius announced closings on Monday night. I'm not sure why Cornell didn't do the same. Employees in my office come from as far away as Syracuse and Elmira and driving home in the midst of the storm at noon posed a hardship on them. Many staff in my office need to arrange childcare for children who are out of school. I've found that these days aren't as productive in my office – people are focused on the weather, getting home, and students aren't visiting our office.

For me this storm (and many others I've seen when we haven't closed, but probably should have considered it) pose questions about work/life balance, and when we should push versus when we should just sit back, relax, and let nature take over for a few hours (or 48 hours). I know there are storms where the amount of snow varies

widely across our region, but there are also well-predicted, larger storms that drop a significant amount of snow everywhere. This storm was the latter. If work/life balance and wellness are so important, why does the university continue to press people to make a decision between coming in and using vacation/personal time, and then close at a point when some non-essential employees have already decided to trek in? I also believe this can lead to morale and mental health issues for non-essential employees who are dedicated and overachievers (this is the culture we create and serve) who routinely come in during storms.

I think that Cornell made the right call in this storm, but made it late, once again.

186. Staff

I have worked at Cornell for over 36 years and it seems that if the University closes (which is rare) it is always after we have struggled to get here and the weather conditions are at their worst. If it is a pretty sure bet that the weather is going to be really bad and most everything else in the area is closed, it would make sense to close the University also. Why needlessly endanger employees and students? Thank you for the opportunity to express my view

187. Staff

Cornell has an unfortunate reputation when it comes to snow days. We are a joke among the community at large because we only close once a decade with little or no regard for the safety of those traveling to and from campus. I understand that we have students living on campus and therefore need to maintain some basic services, but TC3, Ithaca, and Binghamton University are all in the same situation but make much better decisions regarding snow days. It was absolutely insane to keep the University open until noon on Tuesday, March 14th. The University put the lives of not only its employees and off campus students in danger, but the lives of the emergency responders that had to come to their rescue. By forcing people to unnecessarily travel in such severe weather also delays the local, county, and state highway departments ability to clear the streets for true emergencies. Why is there such hesitation and delay in closing? I just don't understand it. It shows a real lack of leadership and disregard of personal safety. Why did the University wait until people are already traveling or on campus to close? This storm was not a surprise. Once it was clear it was going to be as intense as predicted, which was very early on Tuesday morning, the University should have followed TC3, IC, and BU in closing. If there are states of emergency called by the county or state, the University should close for all non-essential personal. Why is that not just common sense? For an institution that preaches a strict adherence to the highest safety standards on campus, its policies (or lack thereof) regarding severe weather closing are very hypocritical.

188. []

189. Staff

Thank you for requesting comments on the recent snow-related closing.

Tuesday: I am surprised that Cornell opened on Tuesday, given that by early Tuesday it was quite clear the storm had changed course and we were almost certain to get large amounts of snow and wind, which would make clearing roads difficult at best. And, even though the county-wide travel ban was not in place until 3:00p, the Sherriff had issued a bulletin recommending that those driving leave by noon. Managers reporting to me and I spend a good bit of the morning determining what staffing was available, who was within walking distance,

who could take the bus, and who we needed to try to send home as early as possible because they had driven to campus.

Wednesday: again, several of us spent the morning in close contact via text messages, trying to determine how we could be ready to open at noon, and what level of service we could provide. The decision to delay reopening from noon to 4:30 came late enough that one staff member, who has a longer drive to work, was already en route, knowing that she would need to shovel before staff arrived and the facility opened. In addition, the 4:30 reopening meant that many offices simply could close and not make any arrangements for the rest of the day. Those who are open well into the evening again were texting and e-mailing, trying to determine what levels of service could be provided with staff who could get to campus safely.

Additional thoughts: those living in this area are used to and know how to handle and navigate reasonable amount of snow. And, had the storm centered to the east, as originally predicted, Ithaca likely would have had reasonable amounts of snow. But, the shift west seemed almost certain by Monday evening, and all major forecast centers were in agreement that we would see a major storm. I understand not wanting to close in anticipation of a major snow event, but that needs to be balanced with a concern for staff safety. In determining re-opening times, and given the distance many of Cornell's staff have to drive, announcements need to be made as early as possible. I appreciate that Cornell is a residential campus, that instruction is paramount, and that students need services. I think, perhaps, more transparency around the decision-making process would be useful in helping all to understand the outcomes.

190. Staff

I appreciate you reaching out regarding snow days. I have long thought that Cornell was unreasonable about their policy around this issue. I believe if the local schools are shut down, so should Cornell. It's not worth people risking their lives to drive in, and scrambling to find childcare for their children, when the rest of the community has decided it's unsafe to drive to work.

191. Staff

Thank you for addressing this!! I have to say I was thankful as a commuter from King Ferry, that the campus was shut down and that I didn't have to worry about driving in to work during that storm. Roads were closed, states of emergency were called, travel bans were in order and local schools were shut down (so I got to enjoy 2 days safe and warm inside with my 8 and 9 year olds while the snow was piling up and the wind was whipping). I thought wisdom and common sense were used in making the decision to close.

I usually have no issue driving to work in the winter but it was dangerous outside during that storm and I think it was in the best interest of the faculty and staff as well as the campus to shut down the university and I hope in the future if a storm like this arises the same decision is made to close Cornell.

Parking was an issue and that was the only issue returning back to work because cars are parked in the parking lots overnight and plows can't get in between the cars so although spaces are available, it is impossible to get into them. It already seems like a parking permit is only permission to hunt for a parking space rather than a guarantee of a parking spot. I just wish there were some policy to get students who leave cars parked in lots overnight to move their vehicles so lots can be plowed and people who drive in to work can find a spot. Maybe it would help if there was a designated place for students to park that wasn't combined with faculty and staff

parking. I had to park in a paid parking lot to come to work and I also pay for a WE parking permit so that stunk. ☹

192. []

193. Staff

It seems to me that Cornell has a reactive approach to closing for weather, rather than a proactive one. I understand that there are a lot of factors that go into decision to close, I know that closing the university costs a large amount of money, and I recognize that it is important to the student body that we stay open so that their education can be furthered (as education is the main purpose of this organization).

However, with the snow events that we get here in upstate New York, I would find it prudent if Cornell were somewhat more lenient in their policy on closing. Yes, many students live on or close to campus, and faculty are generally situated in neighborhoods close to where they teach (and so can more easily get to campus), but many staff do not have such a convenient situation. Building care and grounds staff in particular tend to live far away from campus (I know of quite a few who have to drive 45 minutes without bad traffic or inclement weather), but they are the ones who need to be here first to clear away any snow or ice. Given their early hours, many are on campus before most roads are plowed. While this is not such a problem for an inch or two of snow, it becomes much more dangerous when there's a significant storm.

For the event 2 weeks ago, I feel that Cornell should have recognized the severity of the storm and closed earlier and with more advance notice than it did. Anyone who was on campus for the morning on 3/14/17 quite frankly risked their life to get in—and then again to get back home, when the roads were even worse than that morning. Additionally, conditions on Wednesday were not expected to improve substantially enough that coming in that afternoon would have been feasible for many people, so closing outright for the whole day (and, I stress, with more advance warning than a few hours) was a far safer decision.

Again, I understand why Cornell is hesitant to close, but I worry that someone will lose their life or be seriously injured trying to get to work because they felt that they were required to be there, even with personal time available. Regarding the email sent on 3/13/17, I also take issue with being encouraged to stay off of snowy roads, but being told (contradictorily, I feel) that my work is necessary and I should make efforts to be at my job, even when conditions are dangerous. I understand the sentiment behind this statement, but the end message felt like we should be choosing to put ourselves in danger to come in. Generally, I feel supported by Cornell and like my best interests as an employee are recognized and upheld, but that was not the case here.

I hope you understand my concerns regarding this issue, and I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinions. I am not suggesting that Cornell close at every threat of a snowfall, but I think staying open when literally everything else in the area is closed is both dangerous and presents a poor image—this is an institute of learning, not a hospital or fire department (and to push this point: my mother, a nurse herself who lives in the area, was called off of work for the inclement weather on Tuesday night). People will not die if we close for a day. A test may be delayed or a class somewhat rushed for the rest of the semester, but the person who has to be here at 3 AM to clear sidewalks will not get into an accident coming in from Spencer.

194. Staff

I think it would be wise to take into account that many staff travel great distances to get to work. And some that travel the farthest may not be able to work from home, or may not easily take a vacation day (especially those who are new or non-exempt).

Also, when Ithaca City schools and neighboring schools close, it may be difficult for parents of young children to find a caregiver.

If the issue is one of students being on campus and missing classes, you could consider different policies for staff vs professors. Professors who cannot get into work could always consider canceling class, or assigning an out-of-class assignment. Professors and exempt employees have more control of their time, and will be best able to work around when snow makes travel difficult. They will also have the ability to work at home if needed. For example, I worked all day at home on Wednesday, the first snow day, because I had projects that needed to be done. Thanks for being open to ideas!

195. Staff

I think it valuable to gain feedback on this process and appreciate your reaching out to all involved. I can imagine how hard it is to make the decision to close the university given the fact that students are still here on campus and there are vital operations that need to continue no matter what. However, I did feel in this case that it was irresponsible not to close the campus earlier in the day. I made the trek in and it was not pleasant and was even more difficult to make it home once the university closed. It was incredibly dangerous on the roads and to leave the campus open created a situation where more people were on the road unnecessarily and in very dangerous conditions. Our staff does a phenomenal job clearing snow and making us as safe as possible in most situations but this was clearly an exceptional event and should have been treated as such much earlier in the morning.

I mentioned before that I worked in the payroll office. We are on the other end of the impacts of closing the campus in the matter of how employees are paid for the day. Since this happens seldom, there is always a lot of confusion about the procedure that employees should follow when entering time (currently into Kronos, in the future it will be Workday Time Tracking). I would like to see more guidance from the university on who are essential employees and exactly what the university expectations are (who decides if an employees is essential, what departments, etc). There is a policy that seems clear on the surface, but is not followed. (Example: there are 2 options for pay if you work during the closure in the policy, but we currently only advise staff on 1 option). It would be very helpful if there was an HR and Payroll resource that was in contact with the team so that it was clear on both ends what happens when we close (and given that this is my suggestion I should make it clear I would volunteer to be this resource). The ones making the call to close and the ones dictating how we pay it are likely not the same people, but if we are all on the same page, the smoother operations would run. This would also tie into a clear communication plan so that when notification went out that the campus was closing, we could include the vital information of how to handle time and attendance in one message.

Thank you for your consideration on these matters.

196. Faculty

I think, since the storm was foreseeable, it would have made more sense to cancel the whole day. Ending classes at noon sent many of us out on the roads during the hours when the roads were at their worst. For those of us who live outside Ithaca, the drive home wasn't very safe.

Also the class schedule should be taken into consideration. Ending classes at noon means what for 11:15-12:05 classes? I let mine out early....

197. Staff

There was too much unnecessary confusion about how to record scheduled work hours in Kronos. Instructions regarding what code to use should accompany (or follow closely on the heels of) the actual closure announcement(s).

198. Staff

A couple of thoughts about snow days having been a student from 1992-96 and staff since 1996.....

In '93 the University was closed. I remember this well because I had to drive from home and back (12 miles) in the middle of a blizzard because I had a prelim (the trip home on closed county roads). Two week ago, I woke up at 5:30am and saw that all of the area schools had closed. In addition IC and the City of Ithaca offices just announced that they were closed as well as the majority of Colleges in NY and PA. I called the person I carpoled with and we decided to stay home thinking Cornell would close at noon and we would be driving home during much worse weather conditions. This is what happened.

I appreciate knowing on Tuesday PM that the University would be closed on Wednesday. What is very frustrating is the delay in announcing Tuesday's closing. I think it was more than a sure thing that we would be getting a great deal of snow. Making staff drive in just to be sent home a few hours later in bad conditions is quite dangerous. I am very lucky that I have a lot of vacation and HAP time and that I have a supervisor that trusts the decision I make. Many staff do not have that ability though.

What would be appreciated is an announcement made ahead of time so that staff can plan for closure. I think the major impact is on Staff with children. Tuesday many had to find day care only to find out they could have stayed home. Cornell is well known for "never closing" which is not always the safest or most thoughtful policy.

199. Staff

I received the notices in plenty of time. My only suggestion is to close earlier when a big storm is anticipated. I brought my laptop home on Monday before the storm so I was able to avoid driving on the roads. I heard several people talk about difficulties getting home Tuesday after leaving when the notice that Cornell was closing at noon was distributed. I know from past experience how stressful driving through bad road conditions can be and thus preparing for a shut-down on Monday would have saved stress for those who drove in for a half day.

200. []

201. Staff

Earlier notification is better than late notification.

I think Cornell did pretty well this time, as opposed to historically (eg. '93 blizzard). I understand being resistant to frivolous closing, but for big storms, earlier is better.

202. Faculty

From a health and safety perspective, I was surprised and concerned that Cornell remained open during a state of emergency when all other schools were closed. By closing at noon and having people travel during poor conditions in the morning and worsening conditions in the afternoon risk to travelers was increased. Similarly, the late breaking change to open at 4:30 instead of noon on Wednesday (a later opening that I agree with) meant a fair amount of stress and concern could have been avoided for people trying to make transportation and childcare arrangements had a decision been made earlier. I believe sufficient information existed early in the day Wednesday in terms of continued strong winds and the on-the-ground reality of snow conditions to have made that decision much earlier in the day to open later. Cornell's decisions have broad impacts across the county; it would be helpful to know what factors are being considered and the process for closing.

Further, any reminders that can be issued to pedestrians during these events that cars cannot stop as easily in slippery conditions would be helpful. Trying to drive along Tower Road and East avenue with students running in front of cars was unnerving, and I'm glad I was able to get through without an incident.

203. Staff

Thank you for being willing to collect thoughts. In general, I think Cornell goes way overboard on the side of not canceling. Then, in the rare occasion when Cornell closes, we close too late. My feeling about the latest storm is that Cornell should have closed earlier on Tuesday—early enough to avoid staff who live at a distance to not come in at all rather than being on the road after noon when roads were already treacherous and many counties were already closed to all but emergency traffic. On Wednesday, likewise, the decision to stay closed should have been done sooner for the same reasons.

204. Staff

I think Cornell made a good decision to close this year given that the state of emergency was declared for the roads. The notifications worked well.

205. Staff

The way Cornell handled its decision to close the university, and for how long, was a disaster. It had a negative impact on my esteem for the University, on my paycheck, and my self-esteem.

I am a research technician the most common protocol I run is five days long and includes 5+ hour incubations on all of those days. It's a lot of time, but it's also really easy for me to plan the start and end of that protocol to not fall on weekends or holidays—the days Cornell pays me to stay home and sit on my couch, for example.

I received an email from Cornell at the end of Day 1 of that protocol saying, “Oh, yeah, for sure we’ll be open,” so I planned to complete the following four days of the experiment. I walked to work in a blizzard and started my incubation by 9am on Tuesday. At roughly 10:45am I received an email/text saying the University was going to close at noon. I had to make a decision, do I throw away a week of work just because the University is going to be closed for a few hours on this workday (which I had already begun) and the next? I’m not an administrator, my work is not done in excel files that can be saved and returned to a day later as if nothing happened. If I throw away an experiment at noon on Tuesday I don’t get to come in 24 hours later at pick up where I left off. Also, at this point, I had received no word on how I’d be compensated if I had to work, so I just assumed if Cornell was giving Paid Leave I’d be comped for having to work and it’ll all come out in the wash, right?

This is important because it turns out that whether or not I get paid for having worked during a blizzard has nothing to do with Cornell forcing my hand and everything to do with some designation that was placed on me when I was hired—am I essential or non-essential? I spent days arguing with my Payroll rep, explaining that though my Supervisor did not *require* I be on campus personally, I did not think that at 10:45am on Tuesday when I decided to stay on campus and not trash a week of expensive research, that I was forfeiting being properly compensated. (Also, fundamentally, I had no idea *how* I was going to be compensated at 10:45am on Tuesday). When my timecard went through on Thursday it had my regular hours. No overtime. No comp days added to my time-off record. Somehow, even though huge swaths of the campus were paid to sit on their couch, my timecard looked like it was just another crappy March week weather-wise.

In light of the short notice, the current IWP policy is ruthless. Cornell paid people to stay at home. I worked. Cornell did not comp that time. Therefore, Cornell got my work for free. I’m just supposed to be okay with that because someone wrote a paragraph that’s buried in the Employee Handbook somewhere?

I was told by my Payroll Rep that my work on campus falls into a “gray area” when it comes to how essential it is. I would suggest, that in the ten years Cornell has until the next Blizzard Closure (on average, right?) that it do a little work in moving its research staff—at this world renowned research institution—out of a gray area. Maybe in the SOP for making IWP decisions, near the top is:

“How will this impact the work of research staff, who may be categorized generally as non-essential, but are sometimes required to be on campus to complete complex experiments that can’t be adjusted on short notice? This means, according to current policy, they won’t necessarily be eligible for Comp Time or overtime even though they see their colleagues offered Paid Leave or Premium Pay.”

My ultimate suggestion would be that if notice of closure isn’t given with a certain amount of lead time that even non-essential staff are eligible for Comp Time. That lead time should be more than an hour and fifteen minutes. I can *plan* to not work Holidays—therefore I don’t expect pr

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207. Faculty

What Cornell needs to understand is that closing the school and then sending employees home at the height of the storm puts us at risk and is not a good decision.

I'm not sure what your sources for weather information are, but if there is a chance of the weather becoming severe enough to warrant a closure then close for the whole day (Ithaca College did at 5:45am the morning of the storm). You may rely too much on the Sheriff's office for road closures since most staff live in rural areas where roads are a low priority on the DOT's list for clearing.

Discuss now, plans to deal with exams. If you need to have the staff from the registrar's office on campus to make arrangements for classroom reservations, make plans now for "emergency rooms" that can be used for the exams. Rooms that can be accessible without having the building coordinators present to unlock the classrooms. Also alert faculty who are giving exams of the potential change in times and locations. Maybe Tuesday night exams can have Thursday night as the "alternative time" and Thursday night exams can have Saturday as the "alternative time" for the exams.

You should know that you have one of the most respected Atmospheric Science Departments in the Nation at Cornell. We are always willing to help with weather data and forecasts (not to be involved with the decision) and provide them to you for use in your decision making process.

208. Staff

It seems irresponsible that if the Sheriff has closed the roads, that Cornell should remain open and require faculty and staff to drive on closed roads. Clearer and more timely information on how to process timecards needs to be readily available, especially at the close of a pay period.

209. Staff

With so many people commuting to Cornell, I think it would be in the university best interest to re-evaluate when they should close or delay. I think people feel pressure to come in or use their own time if they are not comfortable driving or riding in. I commute from Cortland on the bus, when we had the storm last November, it was one of the worst rides I've experience. You do not feel secure when you are sliding while being on a bus. We should not have been on the rode that morning.

Thankfully during this last storm, my supervisor told me I could work from home. But lots of staff do not have that luxury. I would hate to see someone seriously injured trying to get to work!! If other Educational institutions are closed or delayed, you may want to follow their lead, as it's just not worth it.

210. Staff

It is my opinion as well as **many** others that the university should just close when these types of storms arise. There are hundreds of people risking their safety trying to get to work and then risking it yet again trying to get home. Everyone else in the whole region was closed except Cornell. We all want to come to work, but this was ridiculous!

211. Staff

I know this has come up in the past-- Having employees come in the morning despite bad weather and roads, only to close the university at noon and make them go home (when the roads have likely worsened), needs to be reexamined. I honestly don't have any good suggestions how to manage that; I just know it's an issue.

Also, given the enormity of the University and its 24x7 needs, closing it takes extremely severe weather. Perhaps there could be an intermediate University status in between Open and Closed. This would acknowledge that there are times when the weather is not so extreme as to necessitate the closing of the entirety of the University but severe enough to warrant many faculty / staff not coming in.

212. Staff

I personally did not like how Cornell handled the recent storm. It was agreed upon well in advance that the storm was going to be a bad one, and the fact that a closing was not declared until 12 noon on Tuesday just seemed reckless and irresponsible. I took one look out of the window at 6am on Tuesday morning and could see that it would be unsafe to drive in the conditions at that point, let alone later in the day when the storm was expected to get worse. Closing the university halfway through the day, once the road conditions had deteriorated, put staff members who had made the drive into work at risk. To me, refusing to close the school until the sheriff ordered all drivers off the road speaks to a severe disregard for staff safety, when I generally think of Cornell as an employer that cares deeply about their employees.

In light of all this, I do think that Cornell did right by the staff by cancelling Tuesday through Wednesday at 4:30 pm.

I would strongly advise Cornell to rethink their closing policy, and air on the side of caution in the future. Declaring a closing earlier than halfway through the day would be one step in the right direction.

213. Staff

I made the smart decision and brought my laptop home with me on Monday so I could work from home on Tuesday. I know that is not an option for a lot of employees though. I was glad I did when I saw the alert that the University was closing at noon.,I have to say I really wondered why it took Cornell so long to realize that this was going to be a bad one, when every other school district and college around had already closed. I find it unconscionable that you would expect staff to show up for work and two hours later decide that was a bad idea.The message sent out the day before was particularly galling:

In advance of this potentially disruptive winter storm, Cornell Ithaca faculty and staff are reminded to monitor [CUInfo](#) for updates on the latest university operating status and to review your units' inclement weather staffing plans. With a large population of students living on campus Cornell offices should expect to remain in operation, classes continue and regular services are provided during adverse weather conditions. Even in times of inclement weather, university employees are asked to continue meeting the academic, research and student support needs of our community. In the event of a delayed opening or closing on main campus, faculty are encouraged to consider alternative plans for course instruction and assignments and be mindful of potential disruptions to exams. Because we have a large population of commuters who travel long distances we remind folks to assess their individual situation and avoid unnecessary travel risks.

Here you are telling us all that we need to be here. Oh yeah, except for the last sentence which says to be smart about it. But, after reading the first two sentences, the last one looks like an afterthought.

You guys who make the decision need to be a little more aware of what other local institutions are doing. If you see all of them closing its a good bet that Cornell should as well. We don't get bad storms that often that it should be a big deal for the University to use a little more common sense when it come to this.

Thank you for listening,

214. Staff

I'm glad you're doing this survey and I do hope you're taking it to heart. It's actually become a sort of joke, about how Cornell never closes, but the reality is Cornell puts staff, faculty, and student's lives at risk with their reluctance to close during extremely bad weather. The policy not to do so is quite confusing, particularly when every other school and university in the area is closing.

I want to be clear that no one where I work is unsupportive about any of us opting to work from home during inclement weather. Quite the contrary, just based off of the latest storm predictions my manager flat out told me to stay home. However, I've worked in a couple other colleges and units, and have friends both from working there and through my personal life that I know for a fact are afraid to call-in. They do not have supportive management. If Cornell is open, they are expected to come in. When Cornell waited until noon to close during the last storm, it was at the peak of the worst of it. In my opinion, that was shameful. You may not see the Facebook posts and associated commentary between the staff who are terrified to drive in, but more terrified to call in because they know they will catch grief if they do, but I do. This last storm wasn't an isolated incident for that either. Every time we get any accumulation of significance, this occurs.

It's all fine and dandy to have the nicey-nice email encouraging staff to work with their managers to use their time off for inclement weather. It's quite something else when staff do not have managers who are willing to support the staff, particularly when there are faculty to opt to stay home, but expect to be able to email staff and have them in the office doing things for them. It's all perspective, and I don't think many think from the perspective of the staff often enough. Or, they're far too willing to risk staff to appease the faculty's whims.

215. Staff

My suggestion would be for the messages to come out sooner. There is a large amount of staff that travel a very long distance to get to work. I travel an hour on a good day. Also, Cornell is located in a rural area so getting to work involves being on secondary roads and a lot of hills, which all makes for pretty dangerous conditions.

Years ago I remember hearing that Cornell did a study that the staff that travels the farthest are the lowest paid employees, so their vehicles may not be the safest for poor weather conditions.

I know someone that works in the grounds department and they don't even want their employees to go home between shifts because of the road conditions, so they get them a room at a hotel.

216. Staff

I would suggest that (non-essential) employees should be able to return home when the closure is announced (in this last instance that would have been 10:45am), rather than the time of closure (Noon). The amount of snow that can accumulate and make it unsafe for travel can be a lot during this time. In doing this perhaps non-exempt should be paid from the time that the closure is announced, rather than from the actual closing time, so they could decide to leave sooner and not have to take any extra time (or lose pay). If they had stayed home and worked, they could work right up until the closing and not have to worry about travelling, however, if they

did travel in, they're almost at a disadvantage because they still have to drive home in these conditions (which are likely bad if the University is closed).

Maybe also include details on what to do if you get stuck at Cornell? Is there emergency housing/food service if someone isn't able to safely travel home?

The language in the policy states that those that are not required to work will be paid their regular rate ("paid leave on time card"). What if an employee chooses (but isn't required) to remain at work, are they still entitled to the 1.5 times pay compensation and paid leave? And, (asking for clarification) – is the paid leave for those required workers, future time off with pay, or can the employee receive actual paid leave and be paid 2.5 times their compensation while working? Can they use this any time, even when they're worked 40 hours and it puts them into overtime (If so, this may cause a budget problem)?

Lastly, perhaps there should be a confidential way that employees can send these suggestions?

217. Staff

I would like to suggest that the University is too aggressive in attempting to maintain operations during inclement weather. In the most recent episode, it was clear the roads would become worse throughout the day. Local schools did not open. Cornell remained open long enough for the roads to get really bad and then closed. I think there is not enough emphasis being placed on safety during inclement weather.

From my perspective, this recent episode is a repeat of the university's response to the storm in 2007, which inspired 1400 members of the Cornell community to petition for a reexamination of inclement weather policies: <http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2007/02/cornell-committee-review-bad-weather-policy> .

218. Staff

I would like to make a few observations and thank you for the opportunity.

I have been an animal facility manager at Cornell for 30 years and am therefore one of the lucky few considered to be essential personal during weather emergencies. I have come in every time the roads have been closed to take care of my animals. Despite that it still all seems to be a mystery to me and some of my colleagues as to what the official rules are for coming in during road closures. If I don't make it in and my animals are adversely affected I would be responsible for an animal welfare infraction. On the other hand if I am ticketed on the road by the police or worse, get into an accident which my insurance would not cover because of the road closure I do not know what support the university would offer. We used to get a little "get out of jail free card" form Cornell identifying us as essential personal but we haven't gotten that in years. So, specifically, what is the mechanism for identifying ourselves to police, et al, as needing to be on the road in a weather emergency? If we do get into an accident does Cornell help with our damage claim? Why not?

During emergency weather conditions and road closures I would suggest suspending non-emergency parking enforcement. Certainly keep fire lanes and handicapped areas clear but for heavens sake stop ticketing vehicles for not having a Cornell tag or for being in the wrong lot. In a weather emergency I know of several people who use or borrow vehicles that are not officially permitted to be on campus. I would suggest that the CU police have better things to do than look out for people in the wrong lot during a weather emergency especially when they made the effort to be here in the first place.

219. Staff

I think you and your staff were prudent with shutting down the campus during the storm and sure that these factors were considered: state of emergency given on our roads and for roads that are out of our town and county, how long the storm was to last and other colleges that shut down as well. I am an off campus staff person who lives out of the city and normally faced with weather much different. Its good to research where your employees live and how many employees are affected by weather that is inclement and make a decision from that. Thank you for allowing me to take part in your survey,

220. Staff

I understand that it's been a long standing tradition of CU to stoically trudge on regardless of weather. I do wish, however, that folks would have made the decision to call off work/classes etc. more quickly. By 12:00 noon that Tuesday, the roads were quite treacherous. I don't believe that anything warrants putting lives at risk. I'm fortunate that my boss is a very thoughtful human and checks in on us and monitors bad road conditions. Not everyone across campus has that same luxury.

While I know that monitoring storms like this can be a bit tricky, why not implement some sort of delay, as is used in school districts, which would have given time for the powers who decide the closing status of the university to tune in and recognize that the storm was going to be as big as was predicted.

221. Faculty

Here are my thoughts. Naturally a lot of complaints surface based on what I think are exaggerated claims that the university "never closes" or "hasn't closed in my 40 years". I recall at least one shutdown over the last 7 years. This likely led to the same kind of complaints. So it would be interesting to know the actual facts on university closures, which I assume are stored somewhere.

I supported the closure for this last storm. It wiped out our roads and caused the ICSD to close (causing at least some faculty to stay home with their kids). Moreover, I'd rather be dealing with these kinds of complaints rather than a student being seriously injured because we stayed open.

222. Staff

Thank you for collecting this feedback! I think it's nice that the team is asking for ideas and suggestions around this topic from the campus community. Higher Ed is my career, and this is the first time in the 10 years I've worked at Colleges/Universities that an institution I've worked at closed due to weather. I don't come to expect snow days at all, and I had even told our new group of students at January Orientation that "there are no snow days in college" (direct quote!). While I agree with the emails the institution sent out before the storm hit – this is a mostly residential campus, most people live within walking distance or have access to public transport, etc. – I believe there are always exceptions. I feel that it should still take a very significant weather event to close the campus for non-essential staff, and that was definitely the case the other week. However, I also think that there should have been other times when the university should have closed and didn't, including other significant snow storms that shut down IC, TC3, and all local school districts within 2 counties. I know how much consideration must go into making such a decision, and I think the safety of all staff (including the essential staff who work so hard to keep the roads and walkways clear, the labs and greenhouses running, and our residential students fed) and students who travel from distances (and this number is growing!) should come first. There

have been other times where a travel ban has been issued for Tompkins County or the Mayor has closed city offices due to weather, yet Cornell is open and staff, students, faculty, are expected to report. I feel this is very conflicting and frustrating. Every weather event is different, and of course you can't control it. Perhaps, though, there should be some kind of benchmark or rule in place that when county roads close or there is a statewide travel ban that the University should close as well. I think as a leading employer in our region, and the largest employer in the county, people look to Cornell for leadership and direction. It does not make us look good when you put safety anywhere else but first in these situations.

223. Staff

We're writing in response to your call for suggestions for the shutdown process. We don't have specific comments, but wanted to let you know that if you feel it would be worthwhile, we'd be enthusiastic about discussing services that support collaboration for Cornell teams that aren't all in one location for a variety of reasons, including bad weather.

Sometimes we try to present options to stay connected and work together when it's not possible to be physically present. In the case of snow and other dangerous weather, familiarity with modern collaboration services can ensure essential work gets done, even when the authorities advise everyone to stay off the roads.

If you feel this kind of information might be useful as you evaluate the shutdown process, please let us know. We would be glad to answer questions, present to the shutdown team, or participate in any other way that might help.

224. Staff

It would be great to be notified earlier about closings. When you travel 14 miles away and then have to turn around and go back home.

225. Staff

Snow days should definitely occur when there is a state of an emergency, road ban, etc., and the university should closer prior to the ban so that everyone can get home safely. Keep in mind some employees travel from Marathon or further locations. Snow days should occur when there are wind chills that could be dangerous for students walking long distances on campus.

Snow days should occur when there is a significant anticipated amount of snow or ice. It is silly to have people commute, then close when travel is dangerous.

My thoughts are that it would have been easier for staff if Cornell had made the decision to close earlier, along the lines of all the other local business, institutions and schools. Many of us were already home on Tuesday due to the very bad weather and all local schools being closed, and it was difficult to do things like payroll and kronos entries remotely. It was also tough to return from the closure to a payroll deadline, and the extended 5pm deadline was not communicated to me, so we were scrambling to get everything done by 12pm as usual, even though many folks in our office were still out of the office. I think making the decisions earlier and effectively communicating the 'paid leave' instructions in Kronos to everyone, not just the pay rep, is key. Also, closing in the middle of the day is very inconvenient for folks who take the bus to work, and can make for a very

dangerous driving situation. Especially since they seem to wait until the roads are already very bad before making any decisions.

226. Staff

Cornell has a history of miss-steps when it comes bad weather conditions. We all understand there is a big concern for the safety of the students and to make sure classes are held but there are many employees that work in the research and other areas on campus. A large percentage of the support staff and a smaller percentage of professors live outside the city of Ithaca. To expect them to drive in (not everyone can take a bus) on days when there should be limited road travel provides a clear indication on how well the employees are valued at Cornell.

227. Staff

Thanks for being responsive to the concerns of the Cornell community regarding snow days. I have sufficient vacation/personal leave time saved up and can usually stay home when the roads are (or are predicted to be) unsafe for travel. However, I do feel that the university should close when the Governor declares a state of emergency. Having people work a half day and sending them home in the midst of the storm seems unnecessarily risky. I would like to see Cornell adopt a policy more in line with the other schools in the region. This would keep people off the roads and benefit those with children in schools with more lenient closing policies. Staff members that need to come in should be compensated with comp time. Regarding classes and exams, I do not think that either are worth risking injury or death. Student would likely welcome the break.

228. Faculty

It was a wise decision, although student assignments were very backed up as a consequence. Safety is imperative.

229. Staff

Some thoughts on the shutdown procedures:

Because Cornell shut down for the snowstorm at noon, not first thing in the morning, staff got paid differently depending on whether they decided to risk the increasingly-worsening roads or not. This particularly affected:

- any staff whose kids' school shut down and thus had to stay home;

- any staff whose transportation options were negated by the storm, and who don't have the flexibility for remote work options;

- any staff who worked a partial day before noon, either remotely or on campus, and then skedaddled before the roads got worse or had to log off because the kids woke up and refused to just play in the other room anymore, or their driveway needed shoveled, or whatever it was they had to do as long as the snow was shutting things down.

So although Cornell's current policies encourage supervisors to allow staff to be flexible, the choices that staff made about how they were going to deal with this snow day, given their family circumstances, local road

conditions, and whether or not they could *afford* to use their vacation/personal time – this affected our paychecks in different ways, for a *predicted* heavy snow that everyone knew was coming and knew was only going to get worse over the course of the day. The mid-day shutdown punished the paychecks of people who chose prudence, or had it forced upon them.

Mid-day shutdowns that only grant paid leave for the half of the day that the university shuts down are *super* discriminatory against staff with children or other dependents who couldn't access their normal workday care providers, and against staff whose medical/family/etc. situations leave them short enough on personal/vacation hours that they have to make hard decisions about whether it's worse to risk the road or lose the accrued hours.

Cornell should shut down before anybody even reports to work, whenever possible. If a mid-day shutdown is necessary, PDL should extend retroactively to the beginning of the scheduled shifts of any employees who had to take the snowday off from the beginning.

For that matter, not offering PDL to staff whose normal workday caregiver-providers are shut down by snow, whether or not Cornell is shut down, is unfair. I'm looking primarily at region-wide school closures affecting parents of small children (this is my boat), but assume that there are elder-care or special-needs programs for dependents other than that. A caregiver has no choice about whether to attend work or not when their usual care is closed. Stacked upon that, caregivers are *often* hemorrhaging personal/vacation time for their dependents' medical appointments, sicknesses, scheduled care closures, etc.

For example, I've got about 20-30 hours accrued, and had to blow 6.4 of them on Thursday (Dryden schools closed due to the aftermath of the storm) and Friday (Dryden schools had a scheduled closure, reasons unknown to me, but probably parent/teacher conferences). Friday was planned; I had that factored into my accrual calculations. But those original calculations included working ~5 hours on Thursday. So that's a *huge* dent in what I have accrued – and I'm not using up personal/vacation hours for beach weeks; I'm almost always using them on my kids' needs and on my own medical issues.

Snowstorm school closures *hurt*.

I recognize that our students still need support on a snow day, but I think we should pare down what we consider support. For example, *we don't need to hold regular classes on known snow days*. I mean, think of West Campus! Libe Slope is a hard enough climb when the paths are clean and dry. Don't make them walk that in the snow! (Unless it's because they want to go sledding. We *are* still closing the road at the bottom on snowy days, right?)

What do they need? They need to eat, and they need to be safe and warm. And God knows they need some downtime – Jan/Feb/March are the *worst* months for both snowstorms and seasonal depression. **Use the snowstorm as an opportunity to increase mental health, instead of stressing everybody out.** Pack the kids fabulous lunches etc. and deliver them before the snowstorm, and give them some real sleds and care packages with hot cocoa and marshmallows and instructions on how to download awesome e-books/audiobooks both from Cornell/TCPL/NYPL. (TCPL/NYPL would require prior acquisition of the relevant library cards, though.)

My point is, let them be kids again for a little while. *Encourage* them to. Close for snowstorms and call it a mental health support strategy.

What kind of on-campus housing do we have for staff? What kind of *temporary, emergency* housing do we have? My mom, a professor, used to keep a sleeping bag in her office for snowdays, and she just wouldn't even try to come home during storms; she'd sleep on the floor of her office. **We should be offering some kind of overnight campus housing to Cornell employees who are seriously critical snowday skeleton-staff.** It should be open to their use the night before the expected snowstorm, and remain so until the roads are clear. They should be able to get to campus *before* the storm, when it's still safe, have a comfortable place to stay till the storm is over, and stay off the roads.

Skeleton staff should get the fabulous packed lunches and hot cocoa, too.

230. Staff

I would like to take this opportunity to speak up for remote facilities with regard to university closures. We often have enough difference in the weather between here and Ithaca that there is usually a discrepancy in closure needs. This past storm provides a good case in point.

The storm was much more severe in the mid-Hudson valley than in Ithaca early Tuesday (3/14) morning resulting in no one being able to get to work at our facility. Meanwhile, the university was able to remain open until noon. Then, the following day, conditions had cleared at our facility while it remained snowy in Ithaca, and the university remained closed until noon. The result was that our employees were forced to take personal time on Tuesday morning, and were paid at a higher rate for their work on Wednesday morning during a closure.

I would like there to be some protocol for allowing remote facilities to shut down due to inclement weather that is independent from that of the university's main campus.

231. Staff

I feel when our national weather forecasters are evaluating the storm systems and they are convinced that the system will be very harmful to our area, CU should take that into consideration more seriously. To have faculty, staff, and students attempt the drive in only to be turned home at noon was not the best decision with all of the warnings we were receiving. I traveled into work on Tuesday the 14ths against my better judgement only to leave at noon to a very treacherous ride home.

232. Staff

I appreciate your outreach and willingness to accept ideas from the Cornell community. Admittedly, I know very little about the process of shutting down the University due to weather. I imagine there a lots of moving parts and many people involved in the decision-making process.

I think it would be helpful (if possible) to make the call earlier. I travelled in to work on Tuesday and was concerned that I would not be able to make it home at the end of the day. I appreciate that they closed the University at 12 pm, but had I known that was happening, I would have worked remotely that day. The only reason I came to campus was to teach an afternoon class that ended up being cancelled.

If possible, I think it makes the most sense to make the call to shutdown the night before or very early in the morning before staff and students are travelling to campus.

233. Faculty

Thank you for offering a platform for us to share ideas about Cornell closings. I thought it was a very good thing that we closed during the most recent blizzard. As a faculty member who lives a bit out of town (I come from the Freeville/Dryden area), the roads are often significantly worse out on country roads and we usually get quite a bit more snowfall. It would have been virtually impossible for me to get to work with my driveway and back roads unplowed plus the dangerous commute, so I was very grateful to have school closed.

The only thing I would suggest is, if it's possible to make such decisions earlier (i.e., Monday 3/13 the night before, as the Ithaca and Dryden School Districts did), it would help greatly. I did come into work on Tuesday the 14th to teach my morning classes as school hadn't officially closed yet, but the morning commute was quite dangerous and then once I was at work school was announced to close shortly after; getting back home at 12:30pm was even more treacherous with road closures, etc.

I can only imagine how many moving parts there are when choosing to close a private university, so I appreciate your taking this into consideration.

234. Staff

I live 20 miles away and take the CTRAN bus from Elmira, there is only one bus in the morning and one at night. I leave my house at 6:35am to catch that bus and it picks us up at 4:45pm at night. It would be nice if the University could make their decisions a little earlier. Luckily I stayed home this snow storm because I was worried how I would get home if the bus was not able to pick us up that night.

In the past, I was already on the bus and almost here when the University made the decision, and the department I work for was not happy that I was here at work when the University was not opening until 12noon. I work in Olin & Uris libraries, and our hours match the universities whenever there is a closure or late opening.

235. Staff

At a minimum when Ithaca College closes we should too.

236. Faculty

Thank you for inviting our feedback. Here are my suggestions:

If possible, make the decision process more transparent. The perception is that the university avoids closing; the reasons aren't clear and rumors abound. People assume it's a financial decision, anyway, so we might as well explain it.

Try to make the decision more quickly. At 9:30am on Wednesday, the emergency website still read, "...will reevaluate the plan in the morning." Ideally, decisions are made by 7am, particularly for our many employees who commute in from other counties.

237. Staff

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input. I sit on the university's emergency planning team as Procurement Services' representative; therefore, I have some behind the curtain views. We had an after-action discussion and the comment that was given the most support was: "we should have closed the night before, rather than at noon." I concur and it would be interesting to have the decision makers look deeply at all aspects of what was gained vs. lost by not closing the night before as compared to noon the next day.

This is a challenging issue on all sides, for all involved.

238. Staff

I have a few thoughts to share with you about the snow-day shutdown process. Having worked here at Cornell for nearly 13 years, I understand the strong value that the university places on remaining open in inclement weather. This is part of the Cornell identity, from what I can tell, and I respect that changing cultures can be very difficult.

I would recommend, however, that the decision to close the University no longer be enmeshed with our sense of identity, but rather determined based on context and the consideration of safety for students, faculty and staff. As to context, where all other area universities and colleges have decided to close, as was the case two weeks ago, I would urge Cornell to take that context into consideration. Rather than approaching the decision from the perspective of exceptionalism, which I perceive to be the case, I would encourage you and your colleagues to consider that we here at Cornell are subject to the same weather conditions as local institutions of higher education. Staying open doesn't make us "better," and closing doesn't lessen our unique status in the higher-education environment of Upstate NY.

Secondly, I hope that you will continue to take the safety of the individual members of our community into consideration. While many students and faculty live on campus, many others do not. And, most staff have commutes, some from over an hour away. I know that our educational mission is of the utmost importance and that staying open allows us to fulfill that mission to its greatest extent. However, our educational mission should not endanger lives. When members of our community are forced to choose between traveling in unsafe road conditions over great distances or risk losing pay or angering their supervisors, we are losing the forest for the trees. We must be wise enough to make the right decisions, even when they are difficult, before a preventable tragedy occurs.

Finally, if I may add one additional thought: I would encourage the committee charged with making closure decisions to be decisive in a timely manner. In the last blizzard, the university's decision to close at noon came 90 minutes before the closure time. Many of us, including me, had already come in to work at 9 am. Had that decision been made at 6 am, as it was made by the other institutions, none of us would have been on the roads at all that day.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you, Dean Van Loan. I wish you and your colleagues the best as you consider making changes to the University's policies in this regard.

239. Staff

Would be good to have all the decisions about what codes to use for Kronos out ahead of time.

Seems unfair that exempt staff who worked get no day off and those who were home playing with their dog get paid for the day off. Yes, I know we are exempt but we risked our safety to come and get the same pay as the person who did not.

Overall handled very well.

240. Faculty

Thank you for soliciting our feedback on this important issue.

Snow days create big problems for undergraduate courses that offer multiple laboratory sections (or, to a lesser extent, discussion sections), as rescheduling the missed day for the affected students is almost impossible. Particularly in these days of constrained budgets, our laboratory sections operate at or very close to the legally mandated capacity. Because of this, we cannot simply “sneak” students into other sections on a different day. Offering make-up sections at a different time is also difficult because of the issues surrounding both student schedules and lab room schedules.

One option would be to give the affected students a “pass” for the affected day, but this is also not so simple. First, many of our labs are multi-week affairs, and one missed section can prevent students from completing a longer assignment. Second, the labs play an important educational role that dovetails with other activities. In other words, not completing a laboratory assignment can put students at a disadvantage on exams or subsequent experiments.

Because of issues such as these, my strong preference would be to keep classes in session to the extent possible during “wintry events,” while allowing non-essential faculty and staff to work from home at their discretion. Most of our students walk to class, so they are minimally affected by snow. Our faculty have, by and large, lived in Ithaca for many years and can make it in if necessary.

Of course, the situation is more complicated if the city closes the roads. Under those circumstances, there is no option, and classes must be cancelled.

241. Faculty

Requiring everyone to come in as if all was normal on Tuesday 3/14, then sending us all home in the middle of the well-forecast blizzard was not the University’s best-ever decision. The incremental closures thereafter all made sense.

Getting to campus Tues AM was dangerous, even for those of us who live close by: e.g., I watched three cars fail to ascend Gun Hill, one of the major routes to campus. And, I had a student injured in a slip on a snow-wet floor – a general wintertime risk, but one greatly increased with the amount of snow involved.

Surely starting with a delay, then increasing the closure duration as the situation proved hazardous, would have been a safer decision.

Thanks for seeking feedback. I understand that these are big decisions with all range of headaches when closures occur.

242. Faculty

Thanks for the opportunity to comment! I have a few thoughts on our recent 'adventure' :-)

- I was working from home Tuesday (I teach M W F with evening labs M, W and Th) when I spotted the note about 12 noon closure.
- I was alerted by a colleague that the note also mentioned a noon, Wednesday opening - good thing as I missed this upon first reading the note.
- On Wednesday, the snow continued so I cancelled my 1:25 class for the day.
- The university updated reopening time to 4:30 (with a ~10:30 alert, if I remember correctly). It continued to snow most of Wednesday so I also cancelled my evening Lab.
- A majority of students in my class are grad students living off campus and I was concerned about their commutes.
- The variety of times impacting University operations (T noon closure, W noon opening, and W 4:30 opening) required students, staff and faculty to travel in the teeth of the storm. It seems that it would be simpler to close for an entire day to prevent any travel and allow crews full access to roadways and walkways for clearing.
- With the recent storm, a full day closure on Tuesday and Wednesday would have prevented any University travel during the worst of the storm (hindsight, I know)
- Similar to public school decisions in weather related closings, does it make sense to make the decision well before the start of daily activity? This would save the commute in and (possibly worse) commute home in the case of a bad storm.
- Does it make sense to track school district closings in the case of extreme weather? Might it make sense to coordinate with the groups making these decisions to 'pool decision making' on closures? I would suspect that if a majority of surrounding schools close, the weather event would be extreme enough to warrant University closure.

OK, thanks again for the chance to comment. Hopefully, I can store the snowblower at this point (tho I don't want to jinx it!)

243. Faculty

Thank you for soliciting feedback about snow days. I personally wonder if the University's all-or-nothing approach to snow days could somehow be made more flexible. It is needlessly disruptive to cancel classes whose instructor lives close to campus. The students live nearby, so they have no trouble getting to campus unless the snow is so bad that TCAT suspends service. My understanding is that the snow mostly impacts the non-academic staff, who tend to live farther out of town. Shutting down the academic side of the University to accommodate non-essential, non-academic staff seems backwards. Perhaps non-essential staff could be excused and class cancellations would be at the discretion of the instructor?

There are certainly issues with having the University's operating status be non-binary. Perhaps it would simply be too complicated to be workable. But I wanted to submit the suggestion nonetheless.

244. Faculty

I do think that not cancelling classes from the beginning Tuesday morning was a mistake. I got up that morning and noticed that the Weather Service had upped the predicted daytime snowfall from predictions the evening before and thought it clear then that things were going to be bad. I would have thought at that point that the university should have closed for the day. I drove in through the snow (which was not too bad since I was just about the only one on the road), then taught my first class to an almost empty classroom. When the cancellation was announced, there was no point in trying to hold my second class, scheduled to begin at 11:40. I then had to drive back to Dryden through heavy snow

In addition to figuring whether people can get into Cornell in the morning, cancellation decisions should also consider whether they can get home later in the day. Some years ago, when the university was closed mid-day, the driveway to the ENG parking lot was plowed in to the point that I only made it out with the help of some students pushing my car (wiser from that experience, I parked in the garage last Tuesday).

One other factor: snow is often heavier in outlying areas than on campus. I measured 26" for the storm at my house (elevation 1200') compared to the 16" officially measured.

the other big problem was, of course, cancelled evening prelims, including mine. I was able to hold it the following Monday as suggested, so I think you did make the best of a difficult situation in that respect - thanks. Only complaint – took a bunch of phone calls to figure out that I had to contact the university registrar, not the college one, to reschedule. An e-mail link would have helped.

245. Faculty

This is a good idea to ask for feedback!

Since I walk to work I was in the office (Sage) Tuesday and Wednesday with little trouble. However, I could see the roads were bad and I understand why school was closed.

One interesting thing I noticed in my Thursday morning class, which was seconded by my four TAs, was that students showed up to class a little late, when in the past they were always in the room well before class started. It seemed that students got into a snow-day mentality. Perhaps a reminder email that morning would have helped get them going Thursday!

246. Faculty

I truly appreciate your efforts to reschedule the Prelims cancelled Tuesday night, but I knew it was hopeless

247. Faculty

Thanks for asking for our input.

I don't have any suggestions for ***how*** to make the decision, but I will point out that during Stella, I taught 8:40 – 9:55 and then 10:10 – 11:25 on Tuesday (the first full day of the storm). After I got back to my office about noon, I saw that the Tompkins County sheriff had declared the county's roads closed as of noon. Thus, because Cornell was not closed in the morning I was in an awkward (and risky) position of having to drive home with the roads officially closed because of bad weather.

I think in retrospect it would have been safer to have closed Cornell the entire day, so I wasn't put in that position. Given that Stella was predicted far in advance to be a severe storm, I think this was foreseeable.

Perhaps the risk of this can be taken into account in the future.

248. Faculty

I appreciated the decision to shut down the university during the worst of the storm. As someone who teaches Wednesday morning, one thing that was difficult for me (as well as for my students) was the uncertainty of the expected re-opening time. I understand why re-opening is a moving target, and why the time ultimately needed to be postponed, but the phrasing also did not rule out the possibility of an EARLIER re-opening, which I doubt was a possibility from your point of view, especially well into the night. I felt the need to prepare for class that was not likely to happen, just in case, and was also not sure when it made sense to send students instructions about how we would make up for the lost session. Changing the wording to "The campus will re-open no earlier than noon Wednesday" would have been helpful.

249. Faculty

In general, I thought that this was handled reasonably well. I would have preferred that Cornell give more advanced notice of the shutdown. I came to campus on Tuesday at 10AM because I was scheduled to teach in the afternoon. I found at 10:45 AM that Cornell was closing at noon. It would have saved everyone time and kept everyone safer to have announced earlier that the University was closing at noon.

250. Staff

I am writing to add my thoughts about the snow day cancellation policies. First off context is important. I am a Floridian and this in my third ever winter. I am a master of driving through hurricanes and apocalyptic type rain/flooding, but the snow doesn't even compare. Snow is by far the worst thing I have ever driven in, even if it isn't actively snowing and it's just the built up on the ground. I know there are a lot of people in a similar boat as me. Cornell employs people from all different backgrounds and regions, most of which have not dealt with the likes of an Ithaca winter.

I was on my way to work several weeks before Stella and there was snow on the ground. I was turning right when my car fishtailed and slammed into a cement barrier. I was stunned but ok. My car appeared fine, through my alignment was off. I carried on my way. Well I took my car in for an oil change and alignment two weeks later and found that the tire rod and several connective parts had been bent in the situation. My car was rated unsafe to drive and it needed immediate fixing. \$1760.00 later my car was fixed. Luckily my insurance covered the cost, but I still had to pay a high deductible and miss work running to and fro the various shops getting quotes and coordinating the car repair.

Driving/commuting in the snow is dangerous to your person and property. I feel like Cornell boasts its ability to keep its doors open and plunge headlong into the perilous winter precipitation. As if they it is a hardy institution that will not be bent to the whims of nature. I think this stance needs some reconsidering. The people supporting this institution are not impervious to the snows on the ground or the sickness that it brings. Many people commute to the campus from far off locations. I don't know at which point you would draw the line, but I would suggest a more lax policy.

251. Staff

Thank you so much for being open to receiving feedback/ observations regarding Snow Days at Cornell!

I live in an area where TCAT service is limited (2 runs in the morning, 2 in the afternoon). On light snow days the bus is generally delayed ½ hr to 45 min. due to road conditions/ route difficulty. With a snow storm like Stella the roads are dangerous for the bus.

It is risky to get onto campus not knowing if the buses will continue running. Further because of the infrequent bus service a 12 pm shutdown means an almost 5 hour wait (if the bus continues running). I don't have much experience driving in the snow and am wary of putting myself in that position.

I have a great team that is understanding of limitations in travel so the pressure to come into the office when the roads are unfavorable isn't as strong.

252. Staff

Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback, since I work for dining and still need to provide food for our students, I have two points of concern. The first being that if the university had followed suite with the surrounding business and neighboring campuses, it would make it much easier to assemble available staff and consolidate dining operations/give notice to students about available eateries. The second being that, AM shift employees were scrambling to get on the roads, and care for/pickup family members before there was a travel ban in place, due to the fact that opening and closing these operations takes multiple hours and cannot be abandoned mid service even if the university has closed.

I must also say that I was very pleased that myself and all remaining staff on campus throughout the snow storm were offered a place to stay for both nights.

253. Staff

Closing the university, I would imagine it to be a difficult decision to make. However, for the safety of all, at times it becomes necessary. I think that perhaps a storm recovery should be considered. That is to say, if the university is closed down for one day, closing another day should be considered for the recovery period. Returning the day after the storm, subjects everyone to vehicle and pedestrian traffic on incompletely cleaned roads, parking lots, and sidewalks. This can create dangerous situations. Although staff did work through the storm, it's usually, I believe with a minimal number of people. They are not able to do a complete clean up job in the face of the storm. The next day, with full staff is when the work to complete the clean up takes place. The way it is now, they are faced with this massive cleanup with all staff, students and traffic returning. It would be, in my opinion, much easier to clean up and much safer for all, to institute a recovery period. Since the university is only closed, on average, once every decade, perhaps this would be the thing to do.

254. Staff

It should be taken into account the remote facilities, with the Cornell University Agricultural Research Stations, as well as any other CU facilities not in Tompkins County, especially when formulating a protocol for entering snow days for local sites in Kronos.

255. Staff

I wanted to let you know I live in Auburn, NY which is almost an hour drive from Ithaca. I love my job but get nervous driving in the bad weather. I think it would be very helpful if Cornell could think about shutting down when counties are in a state of emergency and we're not supposed to be driving on the roads. Also think about shutting down when Ithaca and surrounding schools shut down or at least go on a delay when that happens to see if things improve. Big storms that are predicted with dangerous driving conditions Cornell should always think about shutting down.

256. Staff

I would like to share some thoughts I submitted a few years ago and some new observations.

Following a snowstorm I have often seen that Cornell is fully operational, but in coming to campus at the start of the work day it is not.

Typically it is only the central area around Day Hall that is truly clean

Many buildings and walkways are blocked by snow

Plow berms have blocked entrances to parking areas and buildings.

Campus may be ready, but the town/city of Ithaca roads are not, not to mention surrounding communities.

For example on the 14th, the roads directly outside campus were the worst. I imagine Ithaca prioritized other roads.

The rte 13 corridor out to Cortland often gets a great deal more snow than campus proper.

Cornell policy seems to be written in a "two faced" manner, we are expected to come in (or use time) but to also be safe, the implication being that if we try to come in and get hurt, it is our fault.

We are told to work with our managers for arrangements, but frequently managers (being salaried) have already decided to "work from home", making them immune to the plight of hourly workers.

In addition many times those managers tend to be mum when the issue comes up, not responding to emails/calls

It would be nice if there was an expectation that "if your subordinates are expected to come into the office, you should too"

The policy email that go out, instead of just stating what is needed, instead link and reference other policies on other pages. It makes it very hard for folks/managers etc. to really know what is expected.

Not to mention the issues around school closures, road closures etc. This I know can be tough as no two communities in the area can seem to agree on closures.

As someone who drove into work on the 14th, and had to drive home in horrible conditions, Cornell has no business being open. Given the amount of snow accumulated by 6am and that more was clearly on its way, that should have been obvious.

I know it is a difficult thing for Cornell to close, there are many essential services, and items that have to occur and class time is at a premium, so I appreciate you taking this feedback.

257. Staff

I think it would be nice if when we know there is a giant snow storm coming to formulate a plan ahead of time ,as far as gathering staff to stay on campus for the storm,i think it is inconsiderate of cornell to wait till the storm is at its worse and then send emails to staff telling us it is our responsibility to drive to work in very dangerous weather,when all of tompkins county,schools etc.has been closed cornell is still pondering what to do.I completely understand that cornell needs its funding,student and staff have to eat.when the sheriff says no travel except for emergency vehicles,that tells me that if im in a accident,cornells insurance,as well as my own is not paying for coverage.(correct me if im wrong).Ive seen two of these storms since i have been employed at cornell,and protocal has been the same.terrible planning,we know 3-5 days in advance that were going to get hit,lets be more proactive in planning and decision making. Ive been in tompkins county since 1963.ive seen alot of bad storms,I know people that have died useing the roads when they should not have been on them,I was in a very bad car accident in a snowstorm in the mid 80s,i should not have been on the roads.In closing I thank you for asking the cornell community for their opinion and ideas for this matter.Sincerely Eric S.

258. Staff

I respectfully like to suggest that when a severe storm is imminent, such as the one we had earlier this month, that Cornell exercises caution and looks after the safety of its staff, faculty, and students by closing campus before such a large percentage have braved unsafe roads to make it to work or to class. By not closing, Cornell is forcing people to choose between either risking their safety (and the safety of anyone else on the road) and not getting paid, which many of us are unable to afford. A person who does not have time saved up, for whatever reason, is also forced to either go without pay or use what precious few hours they might have been able to save. Storms such as this one are rare enough that it would do no harm to close campus on those days, and doing so would keep people, including yourselves, safe. Without every single person who makes up this campus, there would be no Cornell – it serves no good to put a single one of us at risk as I feel Cornell did by waiting to close until so many had already had to leave for campus.

Please reconsider this policy and make the necessary adjustments to keep everybody safe.

259. Staff

First please let me thank you by asking for feedback from everyone affected by the storm.

As someone who lives almost 25 miles from Ithaca, I chose to take the first morning off because I knew I could make it in but was worried about being able to get home. I work with a great group and our director encourages us to think about our safety first and foremost, so I was comfortable with my decision. I know other employees that do not work for such understanding supervisors and there is an “unspoken” attitude that *if I can make it,*

you should be able to make it. That may be okay for the people that live within a few miles of Ithaca, but many of us do not.

Even though the police stated “no unnecessary travel” around midnight and the governor “declared a state of emergency”, Cornell still choose to open the morning of the storm and close around noon. If the police and the governor deemed the roads hazardous enough to stay off the roads, why was Cornell even open at all?

Yes the students live on campus, but staff and faculty do not and is Cornell willing to accept the legal responsibility for someone getting hurt, if they are expected to come in? By the university operating on normal hours during the beginning of the storm, the implied message was that people should come to work.

The following day we were told that we were opening at 11am and received a message from the alert system between 9:30 and 10am that we were not opening that day. There were several of us that were worried about the roads and had already headed into to work by the time we got the message, due to living outside of Ithaca. So we then had to drive all the way back home. Why did the university not make a decision sooner on remaining closed?

260. Staff

When there is a severe storm coming, it is not a good idea for Cornell to wait until the last minute to shut down when people have already risked their lives getting to work.

When Ithaca College closes, so should Cornell. Several faculty, staff, and students do not live right in town and have long commutes to get to work, this needs to be more of a consideration.

I have worked at Cornell for over 27 years and have driven to work when we have had severe weather and Cornell not closing, safety should be the top priority when deciding when to close!!

261. Staff

I am sure this is a very difficult decision to make. However, when Governor Cuomo announced he had declared a State of Emergency of all of New York’s 62 counties starting at Midnight on March 14th, did this not have any influence on closing the University? I have to say I was quite surprised that it didn’t.

262. Staff

Thank you so much for asking for our input!

I know this is a stretch, but it would be great if the university would shut down in conjunction with widespread school closings.

My job is conducive to working from home, and I can generally stay home with my kids if schools are closed, but not everyone has that luxury.

Having some coordination with school closings and Cornell closings would be a huge benefit to the enormous population of parents who are Cornell staff and faculty and even graduate students.

263. Staff

As you all have probably heard many times already, the closing of the university should be called the day before. Regardless of the developments of a storm, it is dangerous as well as irritating to have a closing called after people have already started their commute to campus.

264. Staff

Thanks for asking about snow days. I have been in your position in other capacities, so I know how hard it is to decide to close the university. All I can do is emphasize something that I'm sure you already know. Some employees live quite far away from campus. By waiting until conditions are really bad on campus to close, employees, especially the ones living far away, have to travel home in dangerous conditions. From my perspective, it is better to make the mistake of closing when conditions are not so bad, risking that you could have stayed open, than to wait and wish you had sent everyone home under safe conditions.

For employees in Government, we prepared the day before the last storm and took work home, notifying the department chair that we would not be in during the storm. We kept working at home or used accruals until the university officially closed at noon. I did not ask employees working for me to risk driving to campus.

I hope this helps. I would be glad to participate in further discussions if you wish.

265. Staff

First, I would like to thank the shutdown team for giving us the opportunity to share our thoughts on this issue. That being said, I would like to say that I feel the University generally does a good job in making these decisions. However, during our recent blizzard, I felt that it was unwise to have employees, many of whom travel great distances to reach campus, traveling to work before the university made the decision to close. This was especially disheartening when many other colleges and universities in the area, e.g. Ithaca College, SUNY Cortland, Syracuse University, had already made the decision to close to protect their employees.

The decision did not affect me personally as I had previously made arrangements to work from home. Unfortunately, this is not an option for many employees. It is my hope that, in the future, Cornell University will put the well-being of its faculty, staff and students first and make the decision to close well in advance of the time when students and employees will have to begin their long and possibly treacherous journey to campus.

266. Staff

I chose not to go to work on that Tuesday of the snow storm because in my experience at Cornell they don't close until staff gets to work. Those of us who don't have the option of "working from home" have to use our own time if we decide to stay home and stay safe. It is unsafe to have them go back home after the weather/roads has gotten progressively worse.

267. Staff

The email that came out was not very supportive of employees staying home if they were concerned about roads. I read the policy and it is much more forgiving. It seems to me that the last time we received an email about a possible storm, the email was much more supportive of people taking time off if they were concerned about driving.

268. Staff

If the county or surrounding counties have closed the roads, have put up travel advisories, or everything in the area is closed, I find it frustrating to have everyone come in only to have to turn around and drive on roads that they shouldn't be on. Many people live 30 miles away which makes traveling during inclement weather not safe or practical. Many people may not want to use vacation or personal time and will be stubborn and drive in risking an accident. I take pride in that Cornell will be open during all kinds of weather, but some times when every forecast is saying that conditions will deteriorate, why have everyone come in.

269. Staff

I'm not sure how this might have been prevented, but it was my observation that staff who drove to work on the morning of Tuesday, March 14, and then drove home again by noon, were risking their safety and their automobiles, as the roads were treacherous throughout the morning when the University was open. Following the advice of the Sherriff is a clear step, but if a major storm is not only predicted but is also happening, AND the roads have not been cleared, why risk people's safety by keeping the university open? There was no point to remaining open Tuesday morning only to close at noon. Unless you can have some sort of "in between" status: when in doubt, keep university open, but urge and strongly encourage all staff who must drive or take public transport to work to stay home so that no one feels obligated to come in, and if certain facilities must close under such conditions, then so be it. I elected to stay home that day, and I was fearing for my colleagues' safety that morning.

270. Staff

My thoughts about the University and the closing due to weather are that if the roads are closed, the University should closed. This does not mean that it is closed, but so called "essential" departments expect you to arrive at work, ie Cornell Health. An accident in your vehicle could have catastrophic results for the employee or in any case ruin the only transportation that they have to get to work. Thank you.

271. Staff

Thank you for asking for input. I think the major issue with the recent snow event was that decisions were made very late in the game. For example, on Wednesday, people who live outside of Ithaca had already begun making their way to campus for the noon opening when it was announced that the university would remain closed until 4:30 p.m. I know many people were very frustrated with that.

I think in general feathers get ruffled when a note is sent out that says "With a large population of students living on campus" but it seems to discount the fact that staff and faculty do not. Faculty can cancel class without consequence, staff are forced to make hard decisions and people feel pressured by the university to come to work. Many of our staff live outside of Ithaca and Tompkins County and this is a long, dangerous drive. These

individuals also tend to be our lower-paid staff who feel more pressure. It adds insult to injury that you make that decision to come in and then find out the university is closed when you are mid-trip.

Moreover, once we slog through the snow to get to campus you find that the parking lots are not plowed and the sidewalks and stairways are snow covered and dangerous. When you have these major storms that happen every 30 years I think the university should be a little more thoughtful. When there is a travel ban in the county you are located in I think that is probably a good indication that you should not be opening!

Having said all of that, I do understand that there are some areas of campus that must have people in them for health and safety reasons. This is not an easy position to be in. And, hopefully the university will not be in this situation any time soon!

Thank you for taking the time to solicit some feedback.

272. Staff

I am glad to hear that there is thought being put into University closings. While I completely understand that we are here to provide a service to the students, in the 4+ years I have worked at Cornell, this past closing was the first that I have experienced, however, there have been instances where staff are left to risk their safety to make it to campus when they probably should not have. I work among a fairly large staff of roughly 16 people, 75% of which live outside of Tompkins County and generally are hit harder in storms, thus the expectation for thus of us living downtown to make it to campus in inclement weather is greater. Yes 9 times out of 10 we seem to come out barely affected in Ithaca proper, but because of this I am often told things like, “well you live downtown and the roads aren’t as bad there and get plowed quickly”, or “you can always take the bus if the roads are bad”, or if I am already on campus, “this is the worst of it, you are better off sticking it out and the roads will have been plowed by the time you leave”.

This past storm on the eve before, Ithaca College, the City of Ithaca, and all Ithaca area schools announced that they were closing the next day for the impending storm, yet Cornell waited until late the morning of to announce closing at noon. Why? The roads downtown were awful, cars needed to be dug out from the snow, and walking 15 minutes to the bus stop in those conditions was not optimal. The fact that any staff at Cornell were made to feel like they needed to travel in those conditions to reach work was disappointing. Even in our unit, rather than being told we should work from home, we were asked who thought they would make it in. When I reported just how bad the conditions were, I was asked to check with the department head (whom I support) if it was ok if I stayed home. As for the bus being safer, one of our staff members was on a TCAT bus coming from downtown that began sliding, and then got stuck, to which the bus driver told everyone they would have to walk. It took this staff member 30 minutes to walk through the storm to get to their office, only to find out an hour later than Cornell was deciding to close.

I should say it’s good that the committee uses judgement in these things, often times the weather isn’t as bad as predicted and we’ve had relatively mild winters the past few years. No, we should not be held in the same regard as public school closing in Ithaca. But certainly if the city and other area colleges are closing, then that is another story.

Thank you for requesting feedback on this and please keep my response anonymous.

273. Staff

Good Afternoon- As a greenhouse grower we are considered essential staff. We do work every single day of the year. While the majority of the university gets to enjoy a long holiday break we are working with no extra compensation for weekend days attached to those breaks. With that said on days the university either chooses to close or poorly decides halfway through the day to close I am left with the question: Is it worth risking an accident to travel on these roads? I live 20 miles from CU and fear the expense of a deductible and increase on my insurance because I must make it into work. I believe for the essential staff traveling to and from Cornell to perform necessary duties we should be, as our vehicles should be covered by Cornell University insurance.

Thank you for asking the question.

274. Staff

Thanks for the opportunity to give input.

It's just a matter of common sense. If the area is in a winter storm warning and every other education institution in the area is closed, why is Cornell open?

Take into consideration that the people that are Cornell are not all students that live on campus. Take into consideration that the only way to get into or out of Ithaca is up, or down, or up and down a hill. Consider that the current policy encourages staff to make all reasonable efforts to make it into work and that many people interpret that to mean that the administration expects you to get to work.

So what happened with this recent storm? How many of the classes that were scheduled for Tuesday morning were cancelled? How many people couldn't make it because Ithaca is a Prius society and they either couldn't navigate the roads or ended up in a ditch or an accident coming or going.

Yes, for me, it was less of a problem as I have a 4WD pickup, with snow tires and weight in the back end, but there's still the other guy or girl many of whom have no experience driving in the snow that present a danger to me...and them.

275. Staff

I happened to be running a workshop on Tuesday, March 14, which involved many months of planning and guests from all corners of the state and beyond. I was grateful when Cornell closed its doors around noon that day, because I had serious concerns about everyone's safety. I dismissed the workshop and sent everyone home, and later made online webinar videos so that the missed sessions could be made up on participants' own time.

Sometimes, we hear jeers of "this is upstate NY, of course everyone knows how to drive in this" (at least I got a few of these). But when safety is an issue, I think Cornell should close. Otherwise, Cornell may potentially face liability issues.

I also appreciated the Wednesday closing. Driving was equally impossible on that day.

Cornell has typically kept open when neighboring universities like TC3 and Ithaca College have closed. In my opinion, if severe weather warrants closing of area schools and businesses, Cornell should also close.

276. Staff

I am retired in California now, Charlie, we have left these days in the rear view mirror 🙄

277. Staff

Thanks for inviting thoughts on this. I understand the importance to provide support for students living on campus and that many research projects need support even when the University closes. I understand that we live in upstate New York and that it snows here during the Winter (and sometimes in the Fall and Spring). With that said, I think the University often remains open when other local schools and organizations, rightly, close due to inclement weather. Remaining open during these times puts Cornell employees at risk when travelling to and from their jobs. They risk property damage if they are involved in a car accident and possible personal injury in the event of a severe accident. I should add that when I say "staff" here I include all employees, faculty, regular and part time and temporary staff.

The text below is copied from CornellALERT: Potential Winter Weather Impact on Cornell e-mail sent on 3/13:

If the university remains open in adverse weather, even when a county or municipality makes an announcement to "avoid unnecessary travel" (travel for work is considered necessary travel), faculty, administrators and staff should make reasonable efforts to maintain their regular work schedules, **but are advised to avoid undue risks in traveling. Supervisors should be flexible regarding a staff member's individual needs during inclement weather.**

If a county makes an announcement to avoid unnecessary travel then of course there is undue risk in travelling. That is why they made the announcement. Must we really wait for the counties to close the roads, when travel is not only unsafe but also impossible, to close the University?

I propose that the University change the decision process about closing:

The new process should be that when Tompkins County announces no unnecessary travel then the University should close. I would even go further and propose that the University could anticipate that this kind of announcement is going to be issued by monitoring what local schools and organizations are doing to close or delay opening. Waiting for the announcement to be issued by the County may actually be too late!

I would also like to reference the 3/17 Cornell Chronicle e-mail Top news: Cornell buttons up, battens down during winter storm in which they reported, "Full-day closures are rare on campus, happening about once a decade."

Closing once a decade is not something to be proud of, rather it means that there are certainly many times when we should have closed or delayed opening but did not.

I do not live in Tompkins County. I commute about 45 miles one-way to get to work. My practice is to watch public school closings between my home and Ithaca. If several school districts between my home and Ithaca are closed, I either work from home or take the day off because I expect that travel will not be safe. I do not object to having to take personal or vacation time during storms. I actually plan to use some of that leave time (4-5

days of it) every year so that I do not have to travel on dangerous roads. I do however worry about the staff who feel that they must travel to work because the University has not closed. How many of them are injured and is it worth the risk. I have made the personal decision that it is not. If I lived in Ithaca or on a TomTran bus route transportation would not be an issue. I think that for many Cornell employees taking the bus is not an option and we are at risk when we travel during a winter storm.

An acquaintance of mine told me a story about his experience in the military years ago that relates to this. He told me that in one assignment he was to gather weather reports and make reports and recommendations to the unit commanders. He told me that he pulled all the reports but before he typed up his own report he said "I opened the window and looked around." The message was that if all the weather reports showed that all should be sunny and clear but he saw snow falling and clouds approaching he would report that snow is predicted. Sometimes the best information comes from local sources and looking for yourself.

The greater the distance staff have to travel the greater the risk they have when travelling to work. I suggest that your group should gather information on the number of employees that live outside of Tompkins County to determine how many of us are affected by the decision to remain open, or delay closing until travel is already hazardous. I suspect the number may be as many as 20% though I don't have supporting data. Of course, I expect that even more staff live within Tompkins County but outside of Ithaca and their commutes are also dangerous whenever storms hit.

I suggest that your group get more information about where staff live, and how many have to drive to work, in order to understand how many of us are at risk by a decision to keep the University open during a winter storm. Please consider that the health and safety of employees is important and that they really are at undue risk when travelling in a snowstorm. "No unnecessary travel" may legally allow an employer to tell their staff that they can travel to and from work but I do not believe it to be morally the right action.

I would also suggest that some effort go into investigation of how technology like Zoom videoconferencing might enable some classes to be held on-line when it isn't practical for faculty and students to meet in a campus classroom. Technology may provide opportunities in this area that were not available in the past. It may not work for all classes or for all instructors but it may be worth a look as an interim method to hold some classes for short periods when travel is not practical.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide ideas and observations.

278. Staff

Thank you very much for inviting responses regarding our recent memories of the snow storm closing.

I would say in cases where big storms are getting underway in the morning, and predicted to get worse as the day goes on, that Cornell needs to proactively close for the full day. The reason I suggest this is that I am an Omni Ride participant and take the bus from Brooktondale to and from work every day. Because I take the bus, I am always at work, even when there is snow, when others may call in because they live too far out to get to work. I took the bus in on Tuesday morning, but realized that even riding the bus in the country areas where we live was probably not a great idea. The bus was sliding around, and stopping to clear off the windshield wipers every 5 minutes.

When I received the email that Cornell was going to close at 12 Noon, the only bus back out to Brooktondale in the morning was at 10:45 AM. Due to the short notice of Cornell closing at 12 Noon, I missed that bus. The next

bus was not until 2:45 PM. My only way home was to call my husband, who had to come out onto the snowy roads, so it was putting him and I both at risk. I met another woman who also missed the same bus I was waiting for, and she lived much further out into the country than I do, and I have no idea how she got home.

Because Tompkins County announced it was going to close the roads at 3:00 PM, I didn't think that the next bus coming at 2:45 PM would be allowed on the roads. It was impossible to find out if that bus was going to run because the phone lines were completely jammed at TCAT. In addition, I would end up being alone in my office for 2 hours and 45 minutes if I attempted to wait to see if that bus would come. If the 2:45 PM bus didn't come, I could have been completely stuck here because the roads were closed by that time, and it would be even more dangerous for my husband to drive at that time. The only solution was to call my husband to come and get me because the weather was going downhill so quickly. Thankfully, I have a husband to call, but someone else may not have anyone they could ask to come and pick them up, and that would really be a big problem!

If the storm has started and predicted to get significantly worse, Cornell really needs to close for the entire day. I know the decision to stay open on Wednesday at 12 Noon with a subsequent change to close for the day, also affected bus riders who are coming in from out further because they were already on the last possible bus to get to work Wednesday morning when the decision was made to close for the day. And, then they were stuck here working while Cornell was closed because buses don't come again until afternoon for the long rides into the country areas.

Thank you very much for asking, for your willingness to hear our experiences, and for having a committee to review these types of circumstances!

279. Staff

I don't have any concerns with the decisions that were made, but I do have a request about communication.

The daycare where I work closes if the university closes (despite many other area daycares closing due to weather). It is our policy to open one hour before the university's scheduled opening on such days, or to remain open for one hour past the closure time that is announced. Most of our center staff live outside the immediate area and it is difficult for them to get into work, especially an hour prior to Cornell saying it is safe to be open.

It would be very helpful if we could have advance notice prior to the communication going out campus wide. Center parents and staff receive the emergency notifications at the same time as our leadership team – putting us on the spot to make decisions quickly (e.g. we decided to remain closed instead of open at 3:30 p.m. the day the university reopened).

280. Staff

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my observations and ideas.

I think the University handled the closing well; however there was confusion I believe at the Gannett "Cornell Health" building.

Less than 50% of the staff showed up to work but most of the campus walks on foot. TCAT was still operating as well; just on a reduced level.

I work in the pharmacy which is deemed "essential staff"; however I am a pharmacy technician and pay for parking with a WE pass that is never guaranteed even though it is supposed to be and I pay for it as mentioned before.

I worked every day during the snow storm closing last week from 9am to 5pm.

The WE parking lots were not plowed at all. Most of the WE lots were not even cleared out for several days after the snow storm as cars were parked there in non designated over night areas and they were not ticketed as well. I was lucky I had just got a new 4 wheel drive vehicle the week prior as I would have never gotten out of my parking spot or up the snow covered hill roads in a front wheel drive 4 cylinder passenger card.

It would be nice if "essential" staff had essential parking. It would also be nice if essential parking was affordable based on income as well as somebody making \$120,000 a year getting charged \$800 a year for parking is more affordable than someone making \$35,000 a year getting charged the same.

In other words; it would be nice for essential employees to have essential parking so they are not walking up and down steep hills to and from work.

281. Staff

We should close sooner rather than later when a big storm is approaching.

Rather ridiculous to be open when there is a State of Emergency in effect. People came to work on those hazardous roads only to arrive and have to turn around and go back home again.

282. Staff

First, I am appreciative of the University closing during our recent snowstorm. Travel was definitely treacherous.

On that Tuesday all but one of my staff members decided to use their personal time and not come in. The one that did come in rides a bus from Cortland and spent most of the morning worrying about her return home. I was here and had a long trip home to Lansing.

Wednesday was the same – all had already contact me stating that they were taking a snow day and were grateful when the University closed. I was preparing to come in but not sure if I would have made it here.

I did not hear any complaints about the way notification was handled.

If anything can be done better it might be a collaborative effort between Cornell/Ithaca College/City of Ithaca so communications are done simultaneously.

283. Staff

I think the snow day(s) was handled fine this year.

I was also a university employee when the university closed Feb 14, 2007.

I was aware of the impending storm this year (as I think pretty much everyone was), so the day before I was sure to bring my work laptop home when I left work in preparation to work from home. As it turned out the roads were terrible and I worked from home. Once the university closed, I was still able to work from home, and chose to continue working. As an exempt employee I think I have a bit more latitude to work remotely in such scenarios. Overall I thought the communication was fine. I chose to work from home the 2 days, my work was not impacted in any way by the storm.

284. Staff

I received this email and decided to write in with regard to this, since I was a little disgruntled with the way shutdown eventually came about on 3/14. Personally speaking, I didn't have much of a problem, since I live in downtown Ithaca and can easily bus in and out so long as TCAT is running (though I'll mention that trudging to/from the bus stop in the snow, while pregnant, was a little more difficult than usual). That said, I have some colleagues who don't have work-from-home flexibility, and who also have a relatively long commute (i.e. >=30 minutes each way), who effectively had to drive all the way into work, in snowfall, only to be sent home a few hours later in even heavier snowfall.

If this was a freak snowstorm that we didn't see coming, it would be understandable. However, we had been hearing for well over 24 hours that such weather was coming. When, in the early morning of the 14th, the signs still pointed to the storm getting stronger midday, I wonder at the wisdom of not closing the University right away before faculty/staff made the effort to come in. I do understand that a University shutdown is a relatively large undertaking, especially while students are in residence and I appreciate that we are taking their well-being into account. I also understand that there is a specially designated "essential staff" (or something of that nature) to ensure their safety, who know they have to be here on that day.

I'm simply wondering why we didn't save the not-so-essential staff (so to speak) a potentially dangerous drive in and out. Might it not, given our foreknowledge of the event, have made more sense to just close the university for everyone but essential staff at the beginning of the day?

Thanks for your time in gathering our opinions. I do terribly appreciate the work that you do to ensure we are heard.

P.S. I did appreciate not opening campus at all on 3/15, and saving us a drive in on messy roads in the continuing snow! I still had to work from home, but not having to leave the house definitely took a layer of stress off!

285. Staff

Thank you for the opportunity to get my thoughts on the process. From someone that drives over 45 minutes to work each way, it would be nice if the University thought about the length of travel that your employees

have. The weather in Ithaca might not be as bad at the moment as it is in outlying areas, so maybe expanding the weather “area”?

Also, it seems that the university doesn't like to be pro-active with any storm. Other universities and schools around us are opening late or closing and Cornell waits until the staff has risked their lives driving in before they decide to close early...leaving us to turn around and drive home during the worst of the storms.

Thanks again for the chance to voice my opinion.

286. Staff

I applaud the university for seeking input on this. As a general guiding principle, I think we should err a bit more on the side of safety than we do typically considering the number of people driving to campus daily from all over the region. I fully appreciate that this must be balanced with those functions on campus that are genuinely critical to accomplish. Below are a few comments to consider.

While it is very difficult to guess the weather and its actual impact considering the variety of forecasts available, if a big storm is predicted consistently across multiple outlets and appears to be developing as expected based on local observations, closing earlier than later is better. Specifically, it was obvious in the case of “Stella” by at least 5:30 Tuesday morning that the storm was having a significant impact on local driving conditions and was unlikely to let up. Closing earlier to prevent people from coming to campus in the first place would have been a much safer decision. Many of our employees travel from nearly an hour or more daily in good conditions so these folks are getting on the road at an early hour to come in.

I think it made sense to close for 24 hours initially and then announce that the time to reopen would be reassessed later. The decision to remain closed beyond 12:00 on Wednesday came a little late, however, for some activities that were expecting campus to be open by 12:00. I refer to the above driving distances. No decision time will be perfect, but I think announcing the extension would have been much better by 7:00 or 8:00 and I believe conditions lent themselves to being able to make the call by that time.

“Essential personnel” is a term that should be reviewed, clearly defined and reviewed periodically (3-5 years?). Further, at the beginning of each winter season, major units should remind their personnel at all levels who are and who are not considered essential to avoid confusion in the event of a closing or delayed opening.

This is not intended to nit-pick based on hindsight, but hopefully contribute to the discussion on refining the decision process for such events in the future.

287. Staff

Thank you for this opportunity. I represent HR on [] so I was informed as the storm unfolded. I communicated the same feedback to that group.

Employees come to campus from all over the country, and beyond, for their work. Many do not have flexibility to work from home or the ‘extra’ leave needed to stay home. The more notice of closure the better chance employees have to make their personal decision to drive or not drive. It's a safety issue.

Personally, I live 1.5 miles from campus. I took the bus to work on Tuesday and chose to walk home. I had to make the decision pretty quickly since TCAT would stop service at 1pm. The weather at 12:30 was not bad. Steady snowfall but the wind hadn't yet started. I was making better progress walking across campus than the cars and buses that were creating a traffic jam on all the roads. Until I got on the north side of campus. The neighborhood sidewalks were in such poor shape that a normally 30 min walk took me over an hour and it was exhausting. Again, the weather was still decent but had it been much worse it would have been a very bad idea to walk home. I could have driven, but I didn't want to add to the extra cars, trying to clean the snow from the car, etc. I always prefer to walk when I can. But it's tricky to make the right call, and I do have the flexibility to stay home, or work from home, if needed. But when the University is open, I feel obligated to be there, if at all possible. For the employees that made it to work on Tues the productivity was not worth the effort, it seems to me.

I am fully aware of the many issues surrounding closure decisions. There is no obvious answer, in any case. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

288. Staff

I think safety should be prioritized over any other activity. Not closing Cornell the day of the storm early in the morning made many of us commute to work and when closed back home in poor road conditions. I am not aware of any fatal accidents but I think would have been best.

289. Staff

I guess I would need more information to give you a better answer. I don't know what all is involved in that decision. As for the closing on Wednesday there was some confusion in my group because not everyone noticed that you we're planning on reopening at noon. This email was sent Tuesday and that leads to a lot of confusion among the trades people. There are some that don't even know to check their iPads for an email the morning of. So if you had decided to open weds morning after sending the prior email Tuesday, a good portion of people wouldn't have even known they were supposed to come in. Also as far as the trades go, having people come in at noon would probably be a waste of time. There are large groups whose day's end at 2:30 and 3:30 so I'm not sure how effective they would be. Again I would love to help but I just don't know anything about the logistics and decision making for closing. I'm sure it isn't very easy for you though! Just remember you can't please everyone!

290. Staff

My suggestion is the obvious: we are given at the very least, a couple of days notice to "be ready", prepare and anticipate such a storm as "Stella", (I also recall the detailed events from the last couple of times we endured such storms). Prepare to shut down, IN ADVANCE. NOT at noon, when students, staff and faculty have already endured the stressful process of watching their kid's schools close, having to find sitters, then we get to work (knowing the storm is coming), while AT work we hear of a shut down half way through the day, now it's time to finish what was started and get home (not knowing the buses are also about to stop), get to the bus stop to commute, find out there are NO MORE BUSES, make the trek up and down Bebe Lake hills through slippery, freezing, arctic snow and slush over a foot deep to A-lot, falling down countless times, suffering with almost frost bitten and wet limbs and a now twisted knee, almost an hour later finally getting to the car in A-lot, having to shovel it out, finally LEAVING only to get to a highway that am told can't drive on, roads are shut down.

FINALLY, after turning around, taking a super long way around, (and way more dangerous than the original), getting home to the kids only to have to now take the sitter home as well. COME ON! REALLY?? Suggestions are needed? It's very simple: (maybe not for some) SHUT DOWN when it is first known that a super-storm is coming, at the same time you know of ALL THE SURROUNDING COUNTIES SCHOOLS are closed. They have to send out closing and/or delay notices by 6 a.m. Can't Cornell do the same? Again, I am not suggesting this for all the snow storms we get, for the IS upstate NY, we have to expect snowy weather throughout winter. I am suggesting however, to pay closer attention and be more serious about it when the super-storms are coming, and we know when they are. Don't close at noon, not when we know the night before that it is coming. Dryden sent out a robo call the NIGHT BEFORE to shut down the school district. That was the first time I had ever seen that. But it was done so because they paid attention to the trusty weather man and made a smart decision, AHEAD OF TIME so plans for our children could be made. SO.....in short, my suggestion is, shut down when you KNOW a super-storm is coming, pay attention to surrounding community schools leads, make wise choice ahead of time....not in the middle of it all.

291. Staff

The biggest difficulty I saw was when the closing came after many people had trekked to campus, rather than first thing in the morning. Given bus schedules it left some folks stuck and others in supervisory roles having to stay in offices to provide a place for those without transportation to stay. Some of the bus routes only run a couple times early and late in the day which made getting home tricky. Personally my only option to catch a bus that was running left me a 45 minute walk from home. This isn't something that really bothered me as I enjoy an invigorating walk, but others might not have been equipped for such a situation. I had considered this might end up being a possibility and made sure to dress appropriately before catching the bus in that morning.

Something else that happened is the buses became full as everyone tried to head out at once, which is understandable, but what was somewhat frustrating is students boarding commuter, off campus busses on central campus, ones that staff really needed to take to get home, only for the students to get off at north campus and head to their dorm, while commuters were unable to board the full busses. Somehow instructing drivers to limit, non 81 or 82 busses to commuters that need to get off campus would be helpful. I know they do this sometimes in full bus situations during normal times.

Thanks for soliciting feedback. Otherwise just reminding folks we're all in the same boat when nature does this and to stay calm, cool, and collected, seems to help.

292. Staff

I remember when Cornell never shut down! Now as a tuition paying parent I wish that were still the case. I also remember when you used to come into Upson RJE terminal evenings to help students with their CS homework. I was the operator in 1980/81.

293. Staff

When Ithaca collage and Cortland State close follow suit and close as they do. They don't seem to have an issue closing when conditions warrant!

294. Staff

Would have closed the entire day on that Tuesday. Cornell closed at noon. My husband and I work at Cornell, living 10 miles away. My husband went in. It was a bit of stressful drive. I stayed home with our public school daughter. There is my input! Thanks for asking!

295. Staff

Thank you very much for soliciting feedback. I was extremely glad when Cornell did make the decision to close on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday since it gave me time to clear the snow at home while not feeling pressure to travel in unsafe conditions.

Every storm is different and looking back on this one, I expect that you'll hear many express the sentiment that the university should not have opened on Tuesday morning. Knowing that the roads were unlikely to be safe for travel later that day, I walked two miles to work and back instead of driving. I was glad that many grounds crew were out clearing the paths and steps since it made the slog through the snow easier.

About 75 percent of my staff colleagues opted to stay at home that morning despite Cornell having opened, and several who did drive in wished they hadn't when they reached campus in the morning and the campus roads were in rough shape. Many of my colleagues drive more than 30 minutes each way to work and back.

It does make Cornell the laughing stock of the area when the university remains open while other local schools, colleges, libraries and government offices have shut. No doubt there is enormous pressure for the university to remain open. This time, I'm glad that a sensible decision was made.

296. Staff

Thanks for soliciting this feedback!

Given the very long commutes that most staff members face, I believe the 12:00 closure situation was dangerous and burdensome for many folks who were obligated to come to work, only to leave a short time later—with dangerous travel conditions in both directions. While many people were able to negotiate in advance working from home with their supervisors, not all supervisors are responsible and responsive (believe me!) and it is helpful if Cornell policy is in support of staff in these situations. Therefore I suggest that such mid-day closures be avoided in cases like the storm this year when most other organizations announced closures in advance. Late night or early early morning announcements are preferable to mid-morning announcements.

297. Staff

I have been at Cornell 36 years in Oct. 2017. Since I, like many, do not live in the City of Ithaca (40 years in my present home) and have to drive a distance, please consider my perspective. It's highly stressful to get on snowy & icy roads, especially with children that need to go to daycare because Cornell stays open, only to announce closure several hours after arriving at the office only promising another stressful white knuckle ride home. County and town highway trucks need to act on treating and clearing road surfaces first for public safety (emergency and public safety access) — everyone on the roads collectively makes this a hazard. Ithaca is hills and the greasy snow conditions are characteristic in scaling the elevations — novice snow drivers makes the sortie to work highly stressful. I know there are numerous “shutdown” issues related to operations related to

the student population and operations essentials however, sometimes I think one is more productive working in place—but safety first. Thanks for your query.

298. Staff

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience and thoughts.

On the morning of March 14, I watched the gathering storm from the safety of my home on Ithaca's East Hill.

As I watched the snow fall, I had a flashback to a similar storm about 20 years ago. That day, I had braved snow-filled roads to get to work at Cornell and shortly thereafter Cornell closed. Sheriff also closed the roads about the same time. That harrowing trip home was the stuff of nightmares. After that storm, Cornell revised and updated its inclement weather plan and policy extensively.

Although I'm not "essential staff," on March 14 I was to work a 15-hour day and couldn't take the day off whether or not the University closed, but I could decide whether or not to work from home. My boss and I preferred I be at work for students, and preparations were made to put me up on campus overnight if I got stuck at work. With the road in front of my house impassable, I waited for the town plow. When it came, the plow was not too successful so I then opted to take TCAT. Before the bus came, I learned that TCAT was closing some routes which would have stranded me far from work. I then decided to work from home. Later, Cornell announced it was closing.

I heard of the closure through the grapevine about an hour before the websites, text, or email update came out. While the delay is not too concerning for the rare inclement weather event, I am worried that Cornell is unprepared to communicate quickly in the event of an emergency. I wish the University used text messages much more frequently and I suspect streamlining is needed to make communication flow more freely and quickly. Inclement weather is the dry run (pun intended) for more serious events.

I imagine the Tuesday evening prelims were one of the many pressures against closure and made for a lengthy decision process, but it seems we to err at least slightly more on the side of caution and make the call sooner. We may live in Ithaca, but we're not all "living Alaska" strong.

I greatly appreciate the ability to choose for myself when road conditions are too bad to risk venturing in to work without express or hidden penalties. Not all of my colleagues have that freedom, particularly hourly employees who I feel shouldn't have to use sick or vacation time. We should be more egalitarian and compassionate in that regard.

299. Staff

With the recent storm I was reminded how useful it would be if the university decided to close the morning of a storm. I had a dangerous drive to work the morning of the 14th, and when I arrived, most people weren't here, and then the university closed around midday. I should have stayed at home instead of putting myself in a dangerous situation, but as an hourly employee, if the university is open, I try my best to get to work, otherwise I'm not paid!

Thanks for asking for suggestions!

300. Staff

If the roads are closed - emergency travel only - I don't feel any staff should be required to travel to work until the travel ban has been lifted. This would include any staff working at Cornell Health. Thank you

301. Staff

Thank you for soliciting ideas.

My input is less about the process of the shutdown itself and more about the expectations of what happens (and what doesn't) *during* the shutdown.

My suggestion is that when a shutdown is announced, official communications should make it clear what, if any, non-essential business can be or should be conducted off-site or if it's simply paid time off for overtime exempt staff. If a policy exists, it should be linked to (or quoted in) the shutdown announcement.

302. Staff

I feel the university acted conservatively, and on the side of caution. I would not have been upset had the university not closed Tuesday afternoon and did not feel endangered at any time by the weather conditions. Closing Wednesday morning seemed reasonable due to snow accumulations, though opening the university at 4:30 seemed strange, though I was unaffected. I feel the criticism displayed on social media was excessive and unnecessary. Thank you for your interest and for reaching out.

303. Staff

I think it was very wise for Cornell to shut down like they did. The only thing I would have changed would have been to get the email out earlier on Wednesday morning about changing from opening at noon to opening at 4:30p. Thank you.

304. Staff

Growing up a local, then as a student, and then as a staff-member, my historical memory is that snow days were called as early as 12-24 hours prior to the first snowfall, but normally by 3-4AM the day of, so staff would have plenty of notice to activate telephone trees accordingly.

305. Staff

While I do not work on campus most days, I have many friends who do. Luckily, some of them had the foresight (and flexibility) not to travel to campus that morning, as they would have been forced to return home in some of the worst parts of the storm, once it finally (!) was decided that Cornell should close. Others weren't that lucky. I wish for their sake that the decision had been made in a more timely manner.

306. Staff

Thank you for your note. With the snow days fresh in my mind, here are a few thoughts.

Could Cornell commit to making a 'snow day', 'snow delay' determination by 6am and distributing via the alert system, similar to local schools?

Could Cornell encourage all departments to create and share 'snow day' policies that briefly (and in plain language) lay out the options for faculty/staff to work remotely from home or call off to utilize Health and Personal time?

Could Cornell review options for faculty to move to webinars/online classes for impending inclement events? Especially for evening classes or early mornings, where there is the tech capacity in room or where the class size is small enough (seminars) to allow Zoom meetings.

Review essential staff list and update. Is it REALLY an essential function to keep the gyms open?

Review Cornell's options for housing those stranded on campus during a severe weather event. Some individuals were told to get a room in an expensive downtown hotel. Can Cornell come up with an on campus emergency plan for housing essential or stranded faculty/staff and commuting students during an extreme weather event at a lower cost?

307. Staff

Thanks for asking. I think it might be best to go with whatever the ICSD is doing. My kids have graduated high school, so this doesn't affect me any longer but for those who have kids off on snow days, it's always a panic to get childcare, not to mention unsafe to transport kids and adults in inclement weather. My experience is that ICSD doesn't close at the drop of a snowflake, so it's not like it would happen all too often.

308. Staff

If Ithaca, Lansing and Dryden school are closed due to snow storms, then close Cornell also. Thanks for asking.

309. Staff

My only comment is that Cornell should have closed from the get-go, not waited until noon the day of the storm, nor waited for the sheriff to close the roads.

It's not like the severity of this storm came as a surprise. Institutions and events of all sorts closed or were canceled the night before, and having it known that Cornell would also close would certainly have saved many people a lot of time and peril commuting on dangerous roads. Announcing closure the evening before would also have saved parents with young kids the stress of finding a sitter, taking a personal day, etc.

310. Staff

I live in Syracuse and received 3 Cornell Alerts. My suggestion is that you should do one more alert or do your last alert in earlier in the morning that the school is closed. I think that the last email listed below should have been sent maybe at 8:00am or before the start of normal business hours for that day.

3/13/2017 3:08pm - Potential Winter Weather Impact on Cornell

3/14//2017 10:45am - Cornell Ithaca Campus Closing at 12 p.m. (Noon) 3/14/17

3/15/2017 **9:52am** - Cornell Ithaca Campus to Reopen at 4:30 p.m. 3/15/17

311. Staff

I just wanted to express my dismay at being asked to come to work Tues morning (3/14) knowing it would be snowing all afternoon and all evening, just to be turned away when the University closed at noon. Why did we even bother to open in the morning if snow was predicted at blizzard levels for the next 7-10hrs? Very dangerous traveling that morning only to have to do it all over again with even more snow on the roads. Thank you for soliciting feedback on this important topic!

312. Staff

I'm sure these concerns are already on the table, but two thoughts while they're fresh:

There were a ton of cars on the road right after closing time. Waiting until the last possible moment to close means that everyone is driving home *after* the last possible moment. I took the bus and escaped the worst of it, but that's a lot of personal risk to be throwing on employees and commuting students outside of company time.

Employees who stayed home were "punished" (using the term very loosely) for prioritizing their safety over Cornell. Conversely, if the closure was retroactively applied to apply to the whole day, then employees who *did* show up would be "rewarded" for prioritizing Cornell, and employees who stayed home would have a neutral outcome. Though it's clearly a more costly option, I think the latter sends a more caring message. If public schools have a snowday, many parents are going to take a personal day; why "punish" them for making that decision a few hours before Cornell?

313. Staff

Thank you for opening up this conversation. I have been a Cornell employee since 1993 and have been in the position of managing the Cornell Homepage since 1997; I can quite honestly say that this most recent closure was the first one I have experienced that I would say "went well" from a communications perspective. Because of my position, I am often privy to this sort of information before it goes public (I have even been on my fair share of those group calls in the wee hours). Last week, I was pleasantly surprised to see decisions being made relatively quickly and with clarity.

One thing that I would suggest—and this is just as a staff member, not in my communications role—is that the university strongly consider defining and sharing the list of considerations that go into closing—including things like shift changes, the state of the roads, essential personnel, budget implications, and the like. Rumors abound, but the general population has no idea that it's actually a very complex choice. I know that anything published

would have to be very carefully worded so as not to open Cornell up for litigation based on individual interpretation of the list, but I really do think that some transparency in this area would go a long way toward cooling the temperature of situations like these when they arise.

314.. Staff

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I feel that Cornell has duty to its employees to exercise reasonable caution while ensuring necessary services are provided to students. That did not happen during the recent shut-down. Had I ignored my better judgment and attempted to come to work on March 14 and 15- prior to the official closing notices- it would have been dangerous, stupid and worst of all, totally unnecessary. I will not risk my life for Cornell but I am concerned that Cornell asks me to.

Closing should happen with prudence, not as absolute last resort when the Sheriff orders the roads closed.

315. Staff

If Ithaca and surrounding area school districts are closed, we should be too. Essential personnel expected to work.

316. Staff

If the roads are going to be shut down (Travel Ban) by whomever, then Cornell University should be shut down as well. Just my thoughts,

317. Staff

It's a little hard to make suggestions of changes without knowing the current procedure. What is the procedure now?

318. Staff

I think the University should have been closed all day on Tuesday, as it was on Wednesday. The forecast made it 100% clear that we would get the storm and that the storm would get worse on Tuesday as the day went on, which it did. So, to close the University at noon on Tuesday wasn't helpful to the folks who felt obligated to come in, especially for those who have to travel from quite a distance. On Monday night, some schools had already decided to close and by Tuesday morning, all schools were closed, including area colleges: Ithaca College, TC3, Syracuse University, Binghamton University, SUNY Cortland was on spring break, but staff did not have to report. Cornell should have followed suit. Not only was driving treacherous (for faculty and staff who drive or take buses to work), but walking was also dangerous (for students who walk to class).

The Cornell Alert we received the day before the storm (3/13/17) stated: **Employee Travel and Time**

If the university remains open in adverse weather, even when a county or municipality makes an announcement to "avoid unnecessary travel" (travel for work is considered necessary travel), faculty, administrators and staff should make reasonable efforts to maintain their regular work schedules, **but**

are advised to avoid undue risks in traveling. Supervisors should be flexible regarding a staff member's individual needs during inclement weather.

This statement sends such mixed messages and puts employees in such a predicament because they have to decide should I or shouldn't I go to work. On the one hand this statement is telling employees that travel to work is considered necessary and to basically make an effort to get to work, but on the other hand to avoid taking risks in traveling. For employees who work in departments that are more stringent on such matters, they may feel their only choice is to show up for work.

I know the University can't close every time it snows, but this was one of the few times it should have been closed all day on both days.

319. Staff

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I was very pleased with the university's decision to shut during the most recent snowstorm. My child did not have school for 3 days. Although we had childcare options available to us, which many parents do not, it was unsafe to leave the house for 2 of those 3 days even to drive a short distance.

I would like to see the university take steps to build in resilience for these types of events, such as making sure that there are back-up plans for classes or electronic means to communicate (Zoom meetings). I also think that the university needs to embrace an even more flexible work schedule for parents and people who aren't able to make it in. Reward those that can get in (if they are essential), but don't penalize those who cannot.

320. Staff

I'd like to give a little suggestion for the snow days 2 weeks ago. I'm sure a lot of people email and tell you that it was very unwise to have us come in in the morning of Tuesday despite the fast and heavy snow storm, then having us risk our lives again going home at noon. I had a colleague who took an hour to get to work instead of 15 minutes, and another who almost drove into an electric pole, and both of them had snow tires on their smaller cars. Fortunately for me, I had a mini van with AWD so it only took me 15 minutes extra to get to work that morning.

I know Cornell prides itself as a hard-working institution with a majority of students living on campus. However, the rest of the staff and faculties do not. If almost everywhere in Ithaca is closed, please have Cornell closed as well.

Since many parents have to stay home suddenly to look after their children whose schools are closed anyway, I don't see why we can't do the same. Thank you for asking us for our input.

321. Staff

Thank you for asking for input on this. My comment would be that Cornell must pay attention to what the schools, daycare centers, and aftercare centers are doing as well as the surrounding colleges. When the governor declares a state of emergency (which he did) we should pay attention. It's very difficult for parents to scramble to find alternative options in order to get paid for the day and/or not be asked to use personal time.

322. Staff

I just returned from a week off and I hope it's not too late to comment on the last winter storm (and hopefully the last). I am the Facilities Coordinator at the Statler Hotel and Statler Hall, I guess I am considered an essential employee. My finance is the Lead Mechanic in the same department and he is definitely considered an essential employee. We made preparations to spend the night on Tuesday, March 21 so my concerns are not necessarily for myself, but for the non-essential staff, like the Administrative Assistants on campus. There really has to be some kind of procedure in place to not let people come to work, then turn around and head back into the storm four hours later. The only saving grace in the last storm is that Cornell closed before Tompkins and surrounding counties closed their roads. In the past, this was not always the case.

I also understand that the weather is always unpredictable and you don't want to close unnecessarily. You are on a tough committee!

323. Staff

Now that so many folks have the ability to work remotely, using the VPN, some consideration should be given to compensation those folks who are working from home, during the closure. Just a thought, I realize this may be extremely hard to monitor & control.

324. Staff

I think that maybe when all other colleges close, maybe we should too, just saying.....And maybe not wait so long to actually close. Most staff that can get in will get in, me included. Thank you for letting us give feed back.

325. Staff

This must be such a tricky thing for the Administration to call, given that events of this magnitude occur so rarely. Looking at weather reports can seem like the little boy who cried 'wolf' when storms don't materialize up to their forecasted potential and closing the University is a costly proposition.

Does the University have a 'snowfall threshold' that helps to determine closure? If not, perhaps that is a way to start.

If building and ground crews cannot clear walkways, etc. expediently, students, staff and faculty are in danger of trudging in potentially extreme conditions – especially the students who can be weighed down with heavy backpacks, etc. Personally, given the size of this campus, anything over 8 inches uncleared presents a genuine concern, particularly if the snowfall is overnight.

I am assuming that there is some sort of disaster plan in place. However, when a storm is forecast to hit, given the increasing accuracy of weather forecasting, is there a plan to determine which staff are needed when? In the case of Gannett, student dining, public safety and facilities, are there provisions for giving them temporary shelter so they can spend a night, etc?

The reason for this last question is that many of the staff who do this work do not live in Ithaca or Tompkins County for that matter. These staff may be restricted by county travel bans that prevent them from entering or exiting the area. Some staff can work from home, but this staff are unable to do so.

Thanks for reading and for asking for comment.

326. Staff

As someone who's been a member of the Cornell community for more than 20 years, in one way or another, I think the university needs to be more willing to close campus preemptively, rather than waiting for the situation to become dangerous. More and more of our staff commute in from well outside the city of Ithaca, and making them travel here in the morning, only to send them back again a couple of hours later, is dangerous bordering on callous. And for those who take a bus route that might only run in the morning and evening, could leave them stranded.

I have never really understood Cornell's reticence to close, even as the rest of Tompkins County shuts down and states of emergencies are declared. Making sure students on-campus have necessities is one thing; mandating operation for the entire university staff is quite another. I'm lucky to be able to take the 30 to and from home; many of our fellow community members are not in as good a situation.

327. Staff

I manage one of the 24/7 units in the vet college and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you on this. My biggest concern is that I feel that the university often neglects that they are really open 24 hours a day and not simply 8-5 when making a decision to close. For an example a couple of years ago there was a huge storm that hit late Friday night/early Saturday morning with no reaction from the university putting those who still have to come in at risk. Even this time opening up at 4:30 on Wednesday there were plenty of roads closed still and I had a couple who still weren't able to come in. I get that we must be finically responsible when making the decisions on times to open/close but I still feel that we can be, at times, narrow in our scope when making those decisions. With all that said, I am considered essential personnel and have to come in regardless.

Many thanks to you and your team for looking into this more deeply.

328. Staff

I've been at Cornell for 30 years now and have been through several of situations similar to the recent snowstorm. My thoughts are these:

If the Governor of NYS issues a state of emergency then Cornell should close

If the Sheriff of Tompkins County issues a travel ban or no unnecessary travel proclamation then Cornell should close

It is absolutely insane to have employees report to work and then send them home into the teeth of a storm once Cornell makes a decision, that behavior puts people's lives and wellbeing at risk and some might argue puts Cornell in a libelous situation.

I know there is a strong preference toward the academic mission of the University , and there should be, but that does not/should not interfere with with putting the health and safety of employees.

329. Staff

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding Cornell closures due to snow. I would like to express my gratitude for the decision to close the university in our most recent snow storm.

In my case I live an hour away and winters in upstate NY certainly make my commute less than enjoyable on many occasions. With that in mind I have always invested in a rugged 4-wheel drive SUV to help me manage my commute. I also have the luxury of being able to work from home if necessary. And finally, my children are grown and out of the house; I do not need to worry about school closings and child care. All of these advantages, however, are not true for many of my colleagues. I understand that many of them struggle with the decision of whether to chance a hazardous drive, or stay home and use their much valued vacation or personal days.

I certainly understand that closing the university has larger consequences than simply missed classes and lost revenues. Frankly, I would not want to be in your position to have to make the decision. So while I don't believe this email will be very helpful to you, I did feel the need to thank you for making what I believe was the right decision during Storm Stella. I certainly hope you received many other similar emails of gratitude.

330. Staff

I have only one small remark: it was not clear for me (probably, because English is not my native language) on Tuesday whether the "approximate" time of campus re-opening (announced as Wednesday at noon) can be moved backwards, or only forward.

331. Staff

One needs to guard against a kind of perverse pride in being an institution that almost never shuts down for a weather emergency . . . in being "one of the tough guys." Such a policy affects most those who do not live on campus and who do not have the luxury of simply cancelling or not attending a class, particularly those who live miles from campus and have an uncertain drive to and from work in severe weather. An institution that cares about the well-being of all who contribute to its mission and reputation would do well to establish an inclement weather policy that does not force such people to choose between using their vacation days benefit and hazarding a trip in poor weather because Cornell doesn't close, or doesn't close in time to spare them such a trip.

The term "snow days" conjures up an image of happy children sledding down a hillside instead of bending over a desk at school. But for most of us, hazardous weather is not a vacation. Moreover, who works well when worried about their safety? Who thinks well of Cornell when it does not close in time for one to get to their car (often via bus) and on the road before the city or (neighboring) county curtails non-emergency traffic, or before the trip home must be made at 25 miles per hour on slippery, snow-clogged roads? We don't have weeks of such weather every year – we have a few days at most. How much would the university really lose in productivity if it gave employees the option of staying home, delaying their arrival or going home early on such days without penalty, with encouragement to evaluate the risk of travel (and, if needed and where possible, work from home if the university as a whole does not close)? How much would it gain in their regard and

continuing commitment? How black will the university's eye be if an employee dies en route to or from Cornell when the university declined to close?

When severe weather is forecast, we should alert all members of the community to be prepared to alter their normal schedules if needed, and we should recognize that conditions in surrounding areas can vary significantly from those in Ithaca. Those who decide not to risk travelling to Cornell should simply notify their offices so that backup plans can be triggered, if needed, and supervisors should be educated to value those decisions. In spite of the current devotion to measuring and tracking every possible thing, I would not create a new "leave" category, or suggest that employees charge such days against their allotment of vacation, personal, or sick days; such a requirement could have the unintended consequence of encouraging some to use it up (like the public schools do, when they have not used their allotment of 3 "snow days" during the winter months), to be sure they "got what was coming to them." In my experience, Cornell staff are extremely responsible; many of us already work far more hours per week than we are expected to and continue to monitor/respond to business email when at home; I would not worry that a flexible policy would be abused.

Good luck on this project, Charlie. I appreciate your reaching out to the whole community for ideas. Given how long it takes for policy to be established or changed, I may not see the results of this effort before I retire, but I am happy to contribute to it on behalf of those who might. I have worked at Cornell for nearly 40 years and when I lived in the city I skied to work on more than one occasion when even the Ithaca roads were terrible; I have to admit, that made me feel like a "trooper," not like one of the oppressed, but one shouldn't count on this. Now I live 30 minutes away and have new perspective on what it requires of those who do not live and work in the same place. I think this is an opportunity for Cornell to give a little and gain a lot.

332. Staff

We would appreciate it if CU would make the decision to cancel classes for a full day in advance. My husband and I both teach on Monday, Wednesday, Friday. His class is at 12:20 and mine starts at 1:25. The Wednesday of the storm we were out shoveling all morning trying to get our car out, and then we came in we found out that classes were cancelled for the rest of the day. This could have been avoided (and less annoying) if we knew that before we went out to literally "shovel in a snowstorm".

Two of our children went to other schools in the northeast, and they always make an announcement the night before when classes are cancelled for a day (or before the first class in the morning). This seems like a much better system. Thank you for listening and taking our input.

333. Staff

Regarding input about snow days --- I really wish we as employees could count on a speedier heads up. Knowing by the night before would be ideal. It's stressful not knowing what time to get up in the morning, if we'll need to, or whether or not we'll need to use our own vacation time or that the university will decide to close. Personally, it makes me and my time as an employee feel undervalued.

I think the university should be more supportive of its commuting staff in general, but especially with regard to inclement weather. A LOT of us commute in, often from far away (I live in Campville, just outside of Owego) and not knowing things until the morning of is beyond inconvenient, it's also dangerous. Please consider us commuters.

334. Staff

Regarding snow days at Cornell, I have the following comments:

With this past storm, the second day was originally announced to be a noon opening, and then when conditions worsened, it was changed to all day closure. From the perspective of a staffer, I'd recommend that the decision be made in the morning for the entire day, either opened or closed. To have everyone drive in in sketchy weather for a half day of work would have higher than normal driving safety risk, and lower than normal productivity.

When the closure is announced, it is usually followed by some content describing how if you had already said you would not be into work on the snow day for another reason, that you don't get the snow day - you have to take vacation or whatever type of leave you planned originally. If the University just gave the snow day to everybody, it would be a University-wide feel-good gesture. I don't know what the pricetag would be on such a move, but it just might pay off in overall good and joyous feelings. Something like 'woo hoo!'

Anyway, just my 2c. Just what I've found myself thinking about wrt the snow days. Good idea to poll the community for input.

335. Staff

One of the issues which arose from this snow day has been a conduct case involving students not complying with closure of the University and using University facilities through key card access. I do not know how possible it would be to deactivate student ID access cards for certain buildings, or make it absolutely clear in notifications that classroom buildings or studio spaces are not to be entered during snow days, but that would be helpful from a campus safety perspective.

Additionally, there are staff members in the OJA who, like many others I am sure, live quite far away. Any earlier notification of closures would aid those who do not live in Ithaca.