We strive to make all events accessible. If you are in need of accommodations in order to fully participate, please contact the Office of the Assemblies at (607) 255-3715 or assembly@cornell.edu.

I. Call to Order 12:15pm
II. Roll Call
III. Approval of Minutes
IV. Business of the Day (30 Minutes)
   a. Priority Poll Review: Presentation by Carrie & Hei Hei along with Q & A. Please review the EA Priorities Poll Report, found in the Meeting Materials Folder, prior to the meeting.
V. Committee Reports (20 Minutes)
   a. Communications and Awards Committee
   b. Education Committee
   c. Welfare Committee
   d. Benefits and Policy Committee
   e. Executive Committee
   f. Elections Committee
VI. New Business (25 Minutes)
   a. Open Discussion
VII. Adjournment – 1:30pm

Note:
You may join via Zoom. Here is the link: Join URL: https://cornell.zoom.us/j/258604492

Upcoming Meeting:
I. Call to Order & Roll Call
   a. Chair Howell called the meeting to order at 12:18pm.

II. Approval of Minutes
   a. Motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2019 meeting as amended – approved with no dissent

III. Business of the Day
   a. Chair Howell asked EA members to encourage their constituents to get measles vaccinations. Appointments can be made at Cornell Health Occupational Medicine.
      i. G. Giambattista added that the university has put out notice that in the event of a measles outbreak, everyone has to show documentation of vaccination.
   b. Employee-Elected Trustee Presentation (Dr. Bruce Lewenstein and Michael Esposito)
      i. Dr. Bruce Lewenstein introduced himself as the Faculty-Elected Trustee and the Chair of the new Committee of Campus-Constituency-Elected Trustees. He noted that K. Supron is the EA-appointed member of the committee. This committee consists of trustees who are currently elected from the campus constituencies. While J. Kruser, the Employee-Elected Trustee, would be on the committee, he is considering running in election next spring. Potential candidates cannot sit on the committee. He explained that Chad Coates left two years into his term and J. Kruser filled in the remaining two years. He proceeded to give an overview of the new committee. Its goal is to recruit candidates and run elections for the Student-Elected Trustees and the Employee-Elected Trustee. While the committee will manage the election process, the day-to-da technical management will be run out of the Office of Assemblies. The Faculty-Elected Trustee election is managed by the Dean of the Faculty office. There is an upcoming election in the spring for the Employee-Elected Trustee position and they are beginning to get information out. The committee’s goal is to have this happen organically over time. For the Employee-Elected Trustee position, candidates must be in a non-exempt, exempt, or academic non-professional staff category. In addition, candidates must confirm with their supervisors that employment is expected to continue for the full four year term of the trustee seat and that they will be allowed the time and flexibility to meet obligations, including being off campus at times and attending meetings during the day. The committee is seeking candidates from across the university, including the Ithaca, Geneva, and Cornell Tech campuses.
      ii. M. Esposito is a former elected trustee who was invited to join the committee. He added on the importance of the role and its integral part to the EA as an ex-officio member. The Employee-Elected Trustee can be a conduit for information that goes forward to the Board of Trustees that they may not hear from administrators.
iii. B. Lewenstein added that there are four board meetings a year (October, January, March, and May). The January meeting is held in NYC and the others are on campus. There are also subcommittee meetings of the Board that usually meet a day or two before the Board meeting with occasional separate meetings. However, especially for committee meetings, it is not unusual for people to call in. Other activities of the position include being an ex-officio member of the EA, being on call to show up for employee-related activities, and participating in community committee meetings.
1. Chair Howell expanded that all members on the EA are eligible to run. If selected, the trustee will vacate his or her status on the EA and become an ex-officio member. The experience of the Employee-Elected Trustee is different in that it requires a confidentiality agreement. The trustee would not be able to speak as openly about activities on the Board as activities in the EA.
iv. B. Lewenstein acknowledged that the Board of Trustees highly respects the input from all campus constituencies. The trustee would have a fiduciary duty and obligation to the university as a whole, and not to the constituency that elected them.

v. M. Esposito stated that the position can require difficult decisions and highlighted hypothetical scenarios during budget approval processes. There may also be a significant time commitment. There is a lot of reading in preparation for the meetings and the trustee has to be knowledgeable on what is going on at Cornell. The trustee may also be put on dean searches. He has been on two presidential searches, which required flying across the country an entire semester.

vi. J. Kruser added that the Employee-Elected Trustee can get a different perspective of the university as the trustee sees more of why certain decisions are made the way they are. There is a need to better understand the broader view of the university. He found reassuring upon meeting the Board that members of the Board are not paid by the university, but rather there because of genuine interest in the best outcome for the university. The relationships he has built with the trustees have been of great benefit.

vii. J. Withers asked if employees from the RTE Faculty (Research Faculty, Teaching Faculty, and Extension Faculty) can run for the position.
1. B. Lewenstein replied that RTE Faculty can vote in the Faculty-Elected Trustee election but cannot run as candidates.
viii. B. Lewenstein gave an overview of the process. The Committee was recently established at the October board meeting. Its goal in the future is to begin operating at the beginning of the academic year, set an election schedule, and hold a few information sessions. In the spring, it plans on holding more information sessions, having detailed meetings with information for candidates, hold the election, and deal with any challenges that may occur.
ix. B. Lewenstein explained that there are two Faculty-Elected Trustee positions, two Student-Elected Trustee positions, and one Employee-Elected Trustee position.
1. G. Giambattista added that historically, there are four or five candidates running for the employee seat.
2. A. Haenlin-Mott asked if there has ever been conversations on having two Employee-Elected Trustees.
   a. B. Lewenstein replied in the affirmative, but the Board decided against it. There are 64 people on the Board, and there have been attempts to shrink the board at various times. There is also precedence for the Board to use their seats to serve other purposes. There was a complex set of challenges in the Student-Elected Trustee election last year and the Board used one of its selected seats so that both candidates essentially won.
   b. G. Giambattista added that there are two Student-Elected Trustees in alternating years. One student is a graduate and professional student, and the other is an undergraduate. Cornell is unique in that it has full voting members from its constituencies on the Board of Trustees. It is not common, and shared governance is something Cornell has a long history of supporting.
c. M. Esposito explained that when the Board decided to contract, each of its constituencies gave up half of its seats. It created a 44-member Board and 22-member Trustee Council. However, it did not work and was changed to a 64-member Board again. Extra seats went to the Board’s selection and did not return to constituent assemblies.

d. J. Kruser added that the numbers may be misleading when looking at the purpose of the roles in providing a perspective to the Board. The Employee-Elected Trustee can bring an unfamiliar perspective to the board as most trustees do not live locally or work at Cornell. These perspectives are then shared upwards. Having an additional Employee-Elected Trustee would only be beneficial if there was an additional value in the perspective a second person would be bringing. He asked members to reach out to him for more information or support.

c. Nicotine Use Survey Results (D. Hiner)
   i. D. Hiner reported that the Nicotine Use Survey results have been finalized and broken down to students, faculty, and staff. When looking at the aggregate data, not a lot of people in the population smoke. While there were only about 5,000 responses out of 34,000 people who were offered the survey, they can make a blanket statement that people are relatively healthy. However, he noted there is a heightened perception of people smoking across. Most people are not exposed to secondhand smoke or flavored aerosol when going across campus and people generally strongly agree that they are concerned about the consequences of being exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke and vape aerosol. The survey results also showed that if Cornell were to enact a 2-3 year process to establish a tobacco-free campus, it would have overall support. He is uncertain what this means for the UA, and there are still conversations happening with the committee. There will be a resolution put forward, but he unsure whether it would ask Cornell to enforce the 25 feet rule from buildings, removing cigarette butt near doors, or offering more robust programs through Cornell Health. D. Hiner also showed common words that appeared on the open ended text of the survey. There were about 3,000 comments. He read the online discussion public debate comments, and noted that most people are not necessarily in support for a ban, but would like an enforcement of the 25 feet rule, have designated spots, and increased consideration from smokers when smoking. He stated that roughly 2/3rds of the comments supported enforcement and 1/3 of the comments supported a ban.
   ii. W. Treat asked for clarification on whether it would be a nicotine ban or tobacco ban as she has heard the two words interchangeably.
      1. D. Hiner replied that it would ban both tobacco and nicotine, including e-cigarettes and aerosol vapors.
   iii. J. Kruser asked about the amount of consideration that has been put into enforcement, such as the enforcement of the 25 feet ban.
      1. D. Hiner stated that the committee has not discussed a lot about enforcement. There have been other universities that have instituted a nicotine-free campus and while people continued to smoke on the property, they respected the 25 feet rule more so than previously. In addition, the flip side to removing cigarette butt cans is that you may have people throwing cigarette butts on the floor.
   iv. H. Depew asked if there would be a sole UA resolution or a joint resolution from the assemblies.
      1. D. Hiner stated that right now, it would be a UA resolution. However, he would like to work with other assemblies on a joint resolution if they want to get on board. There is still open debate on drafting the resolution. They also may ask Cornell to conduct a feasibility study.

d. Elections Committee: Incidental Vacancy (Geneva)
   i. Chair Howell introduced Jessica Townley from Geneva. He added that the seat has not been filled since he has been on the EA.
   ii. J. Townley stated she feels she is now seasoned in her role at Cornell and has some room to take on other opportunities. She sees the position as an opportunity for her to grow and be the voice for Geneva.
iii. Chair Howell initiated a vote by placards – J. Townley was elected as the Geneva Campus Representative on the EA with no oppositions.

IV. Committee Reports
a. Communications & Awards Committee
i. C. Sanzone stated that she will be reviewing vendor options for EA promotional items. She is looking to finalize the George Peter Award materials. She received feedback from committee members and is looking to disseminate the materials soon. C. Sanzone also relayed that they had some well-performing Facebook posts recently and would like to increase posting volume. She will also be in touch with new EA members to ask them for a photo and biography so that they can introduce them broadly and to constituents.

b. Elections Committee
i. J. Withers stated that the committee does not expect to meet until after January 2020.

c. Executive Committee
i. H. Depew announced that President Martha Pollack and VP Mary Opperman will be coming to the EA on February 5, 2020. During the visit, each committee chair will provide an update on the committee’s initiatives and work. She noted that President Pollack has been attuned to what they have been doing, and it is a great opportunity for engagement. For the Priorities Poll, she is working on the written report. She hopes to have that prepared for the next meeting.

d. Benefits & Policy Committee
i. A. Sieverding reported that the committee has not met since the last EA meeting. However, she heard back from Associate VP of HR Allan Bishop stating he would like to attend the committee’s next meeting on Tuesday. He will also be bringing some colleagues to address questions the EA has raised on career movement, paid time off requests, and the wait for retirement and non-exempt employees. At the last meeting, there was a question about veterans not getting the day off for Veterans Day. C. Wiggers volunteered to look into the issue. There is also an ongoing question about the bereavement policy not being broad enough. There is a concern that families today are different from how families have been conceived of in the past. The person who raised the issue was given only a short time of fun for a great aunt who had raised her because she was not her grandmother, sister, or parent. Families may be scattered, and three days for planning and traveling may not be sufficient. They will continue discussions on that at the upcoming meeting.

   1. A. Haenlin-Mott asked whether the Veterans Day off discussion looked to have the day off for everyone or just veterans.
      a. A. Sieverding replied that the question was about veterans only and she is unsure if this would also extend to family members. It was brought up by a veteran who had to take a vacation day during Veterans Day.

   2. J. Kruser added that as a veteran, one concern was that many veterans have to take vacation days to participate in community veteran ceremonies.

   3. J. Townley added that when she is doing new hires, she always gets asked whether Veterans Day will be a holiday.

e. Employee Education & Development Committee
i. J. Withers reported that the committee did not meet since the last meeting.

f. Employee Welfare Committee
i. K. Mahoney reported that the committee met yesterday and will not be meeting until January 2020. Director of HR Analytics Dr. Linda Croll Howell attended the last meeting and discussed the history of the employee survey and how she will be engaging in the 2021 survey as the HR Analytics lead. She looks forward to working together to discern what staff were conveying in the poll. She also raised in the meeting the committee’s interest in adding education-focused questions in the survey. She will be reaching out to M. Benda for further discussions.
V. New Business
   a. Open Discussion
      i. K. Barth gave an update on the UA. He introduced a resolution on the campus circulator at yesterday’s UA meeting. The resolution was drafted with the help of the Campus Planning Committee and Transportation Department. The content of the resolution will be presented to the EA next year after discussion. He reported an overall positive response. While many people asked about design decisions, it is something the resolution attempted to avoid. K. Barth stated that there was a Cornell-owned shuttle system back in 2008 that was stopped. It seems the historical view was that it did not meet demand. In addition, the UA Campus Infrastructure Committee will meet today and discuss divestment. The SA is working on a divestment resolution with the help of the GPSA. Because his committee works on sustainability, transportation, infrastructure, and IT, they are trying to figure out how they can address divestment effectively. He explained that in 2015-2016, all assemblies passed resolutions on divestment and the Board of Trustees responded with criteria for the next time this topic was brought up. They are working to meet the criteria, and the Chair of the English Department Dr. Caroline Levine is drafting a divestment memo. At today’s Campus Infrastructure Committee meeting, they will further discuss what a potential resolution may look like. All the assemblies have to pass at least a similar version of a divestment resolution for the Board of Trustees to consider it again. He explained that the Board ultimately makes the decision because it has the investment functionality. He reported general support for it.
      ii. K. Barth gave an update on the Sustainable Cornell Council, which is a new compilation of all sustainability activities on campus. He is working on operations and is looking into issues of how Cornell can do things in smarter ways regarding food waste, transportation, and procurement. The Education Committee from the Sustainable Cornell Council is looking to figure out how to change behavior on campus and ensure opportunities for education and change.
      iii. C. Sanzone relayed a question that came up during her conversations with staff members on how “essential staff” is defined. The snow day message that was sent out stated that the campus was closed but that essential staff needed to report to work. However, there is confusion around that definition and within her department as well. She asked whether the EA can ask for clarification. In addition, she is concerned that many staff members are concerned about whether their supervisors want them to go to work or not during dangerous driving situations as seen on snow days. She wonders if they could do more to encourage the university to be more firm and direct to supervisors in these messages.
         1. A. Haenlin-Mott added it would be great to hear perspectives from the dining staff. In a conversation with a custodian, the question came up of whether there are housing options to allow staff to stay on campus after work if the weather is bad.
         2. Chair Howell acknowledged several parallel issues meriting some investigation. He asked for C. Sanzone and A. Haenlin-Mott to work on the issues offline and bring it back up at a later time.
         3. E. Miller added that essential personnel are told they are essential. If EA members do not know if they are in an essential position, they are not essential personnel.

VI. Adjournment
   a. Chair Howell adjourned the meeting at 1:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Tran
Clerk of the Assembly
2019 Priorities Poll Summary Report

OVERVIEW

In Fall 2019, the Employee Assembly (EA) conducted a brief poll of Cornell staff members, asking “What do you think should be the Employee Assembly's top priority this year?”. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide comments on their selection and to share their communication preferences for receiving updates from the assembly. Our goals were to gain insight into the sentiments of staff members that would help the EA to drive its work for the year, and to find out how best to reach our constituents.

The poll was featured in the Sept. 10 EA email newsletter sent to all Ithaca and Geneva staff members, and further promoted with flyers posted in staff break rooms and near time clocks on both campuses.

RESULTS

We received 618 responses, roughly 25% of which were generated by the print promotion. This included 7 responses initiated via QR code. The total response this year represents about 8% of the staff body, based on University Factbook data, and was 176% greater than in 2017 when we conducted a similar poll. 321 comments were submitted in the 2019 Priorities Poll, representing 52% percent of responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should be the Employee Assembly's top priority this year?</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee health and wellbeing</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee education and professional development</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking and transportation</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus climate (diversity, inclusion, respect)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure / Can’t pick just one</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Recognition</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Pay / Salary improvement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Miscellaneous</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Community-building / Social events</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Employee health and wellbeing” and “Parking and transportation” received the most votes. Those two priority areas combined accounted for 45% of the responses. The feedback provided by respondents confirmed much of what we have heard in the past—that the availability and cost of parking on campus is of great concern to staff members and a significant source of daily stress, especially for those commuting from outside Ithaca. This year, however, we saw an uptick around the importance of employee health and wellbeing. 22% of respondents indicated that the health and wellbeing of staff should be the top priority for the Employee Assembly, compared to 12% in 2017. Judging from the comments, this may be a reflection of how issues such as workload, campus climate, parking, and access to wellness services and other benefits are impacting the physical and mental health of Cornell employees.

Respondents indicated a very strong preference for receiving EA updates via email. Most of the staff who indicated a preference for using social media reported using Facebook and LinkedIn for work or professional purposes.

**KEY THEMES IN EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK**

**Stress from job demands and external factors is taking a toll**

Respondents who selected Employee Health and Wellbeing as top priority for the EA cited stress from heavy workloads and the impact of the current political and economic climate. The old adage, “doing more with less” was a common theme in the comments.

> “Working for an institution like Cornell can be stressful in the best of times; the current political and economic climate may be adding to the anxiety that many people face. I
think that the University should focus on ensuring both the physical and mental health of its employees.”

“There is more and more for each of us to do and less and less time to do it. In my 9 years at Cornell I’ve observed a growing amount of intense stress for myself and my co-workers (not just “normal” peak periods of stress, but ongoing intense stress). This is unhealthy and unsustainable. I am especially concerned about staff “at the bottom” of the hierarchy -- the folks in the kitchens, cleaning, faculty support. It seems they carry a heavy burden PLUS are the recipients of other people’s stress, plus not being well compensated to offset these burdens. But we all need more health and wellbeing.”

“Work load of current staff. Not enough hours in a [day] to focus on health or professional development. Job descriptions are stacked way too much and prevents this from happening.”

“I feel that work/life balance is something that we give a lot of lip-service to, but in reality, we are all working more with less.”

“Well being - how an employee is treated, especially by department management, is very important. Good employees should feel valued, bad employees should get the boot - not just linger. Well being includes parking as it's come to a point where the university keeps taking away parking, building new buildings with more residents/employees resulting in not enough parking to meet the demand. Frustrating!”

On the subject of mental health, two respondents mentioned to the loss of our former colleague Gregory Eells, who died by suicide in early September.

“I am still deeply saddened and in disbelief from the sudden and unexpected passing of our former colleague, Greg Eells. Greg was a national leader and expert in resilience and mental health, and worked tirelessly to mitigate suicide in college students. Collectively we need to do better as a community to support one another, take care of each other, and reduce the stigma around mental health concerns. Employee health and well-being goes beyond flexible work schedules and access to gyms (although both are very important!).”

“All are paying more for health care and rising mental stress is a quiet killer. Recent example: Greg Eells. Cornell needs to continue to be a safe place to work and retire from.”

**Staff are feeling the pain of attrition, university must staff up to meet demands**
The understaffing of units appears to be a chronic problem that will only get worse if employees who are already stretched thin are expected to support additional students, faculty
and facilities, like those being added as part of the North Campus Residential Expansion.

“Recognizing that leaving positions open for a long time is not a cost savings tool but is a major stressor for the remaining employees who have to add additional roles/tasks/responsibilities into their jobs leading to a poor climate and lowered morale. There should be budget for temps and outsourcing or part-timers to relieve the overwhelming workload when a group is down 1, 2, 3 or more positions. It is completely demoralizing when a co-worker gives 3-4 months notice and yet we do not post the position until 2-3 or more months AFTER they leave. Especially when the co-worker has specialized knowledge and skills that could have helped with training a replacement.”

“Our work load is overwhelming. The university/college/depts. hire new faculty and promise the support within the department that they just done have the staff to provide. Colleges just say oh well figure it out.”

“Mental health is extremely important in the retention of our students, faculty, and staff. When departments are consistently understaffed, have too much programming, offer too many services, but are held to an expectation of excellence when overburdened and overwhelmed it is completely unreasonable. It has become the culture at Cornell and it is creating a culture of mental instability, anxiety, and health problems.”

“With facilities being constructed and refurbished more [staff] are needed for these projects and maintenance.”

“Employees are asked or told to take on more responsibility because of staff changes and they are not being paid more and are expected to do the job of 2 or 3 people with no timeline of how long they will do that extra work. This leads to burnout and un-appreciation.”

**Utilization of fitness centers and wellness program is hampered by proximity, transportation, available time**

“There are many opportunities for health and well-being on Campus, but none are Employee centered. It is very difficult for most employees to partake in fitness classes across campus due to the lack of parking and work schedules. It is also very difficult for those that do not work close to the fitness centers (ie College of Vet Med) to have the time in their workday to walk or take a bus to these centers, work out and then make it back to their office. There needs to be some way to make health and well-being a priority for Employees, as they are the back-bone of this University.”
“It’s hard when I run across campus to make it to a class, only to be told that the class is full. While I could pick up the wristband 30 min earlier, that isn’t realistic for someone with a job.”

“I work in college town in the Breazzano building. This makes it EXTREMELY difficult to utilize ANY wellness facility. By the time I walk to any location, change, work out and then walk back it is over 2 hours. I do not have the time for this. If I drove there on my way to work I would have to pay to park, if I could even find a space. And as for wellness I donate blood regularly, again VERY difficult because the locations are all on campus and usually they run behind and it takes hours. I want some kind or wellness effort in CTown. “

“Geneva staff do not have access to fitness facilities on the Geneva campus. Academic staff and students are able to use Hobart William Smith College facilities, but staff do not get that privilege. There is a discount to use gyms, but the cost even with the discount for local gym facilities for a single person is significant. “

“I believe all employees would benefit greatly mentally and physically if Cornell would allow employees release time to attend a wellness class or workshop. Certain departments are better than others on allowing employees that time, but it should be consistent across the university. I believe there would be a decrease in mental and physical issues among employees. Please consider this a priority for employees.”

“As a remote employee, I’d love health/wellness options like gym memberships or something similar extended to those outside of Ithaca; sedentary jobs aren’t the best for overall health and longevity.”

Parking issues are worsening
Respondents who indicated Parking and Transportation should be top priority expressed frustration with increasingly limited parking options, waitlists for parking permits, and the high cost of parking. Although many commented on the monetary cost, it is clear that parking and transportation challenges are also costing the staff valuable personal time and work productivity.

“Parking is becoming more and more cumbersome. And yes the University is looking at setting up additional parking but it is further and further away from our work locations. We don’t get paid until walk into the office but this is making the commute longer because of having to find parking and then get to the work locations.”
“Parking affects me every day, twice each day. My commute is effectively doubled because it takes me almost as long to walk to my office from where I park as it does for me to drive the 20 minutes from home to campus, and I’m not getting any younger...”

“I have been first on the waitlist for the Forest Home Parking Garage for over a year. Every time I am in the garage, I see an abundance of space available. However, the transportation department will not release the spots, and provide me with a variety of different reasons as to why space is not available - Completing an satisfaction survey that will be done in August 2018, completing a parking use assessment, no space at this time, all parking spots for that permit are on hold, etc. Several former colleagues who had a spot in the parking garage have left the University, but yet no spots are released. When I ask the transportation department about this, I am told that they understand someone left but they are not permitted to release spots. By not having a parking spot in the garage, I have to park in A Lot. Parking in A lot adds an additional 20 minutes on each end of my day. It turns my 40 minute commute into an hour long commute”.

“I feel this needs to be top priority because if employees can’t get to work and/or around campus, none of the rest matter. We pay for parking and with the construction, it is costing us more (in time) to find a parking spot. Example: If you are scheduled to be here at 8am and you get to your normal parking lot at 7:50am but there is not spots. You now have to drive around and look for something or go to A Lot, find a spot and either walk or catch the bus to your building. You are now getting into work at 8:30, you have lost a half hour of time????”

“The parking issues for staff are approaching crisis mode. ... The assumption that people can make other arrangements or allow extra time when parking becomes unavailable is faulty. Some people don’t have other options or extra time without serious impacts to their work or life. The recent A lot debacle caused a significant amount of stress to those that park there and could have been handled much better at least in terms of communication if not the actual outcome.”

“I live in Brooktondale but to take the bus it would be 55 minutes and then I would still have a 10 minute walk from central campus. All of that would add at least 2.5 hours to my already long work day. Therefore I drive, and have no place to park in Ctown. Cornell really does not care about staff who can’t afford the parking garage and are forced to park on the street and compete with Ctown residents for spaces.”

“We shouldn’t have to be arriving over an hour early to work in order to secure a parking spot.”
Problems finding a spot have been exacerbated by construction, including the North Campus Residential Expansion project, and increased competition with student drivers. The situation is made even worse when special event overflow parking arrangements further reduce the available parking for staff.

“On a regular workday, the [Hoy Road Parking Garage] is nearly full. There is not sufficient parking for staff, and there isn’t available temporary overflow parking for events in Barton Hall or Bartels during weekdays. But, in spite of this parking problem, Transportation Services takes parking away from the staff for special events. Recently, there was a career fair in Barton Hall. That day, Trans. Srvs. put staff at the Parking Garage entrances and denied staff access to the Garage. They reserved much needed staff parking for that event’s parking needs. They had no plan for where the displaced staff would park. They seem to just not care. ... Again, for this coming Homecoming weekend -- on Friday, they have announced that they will close off half of the Parking Garage, as well as other local lots, for event parking. Many staff members are commuters from local areas outside of Ithaca. This has been the case for decades. It’s too expensive for many support staff members to live in Ithaca. Public transportation is not a remedy for commuters whose homes are not on bus routes. We simply need to be able to park when we arrive for work. Not being able to park is the single greatest cause of stress for commuting staff, in my opinion, and commuters are the majority of staff.”

“Parking close to central campus is too expensive and mostly packed by students during the school year and with the construction on North Campus we are even more limited.” “Commercial construction projects are causing massive disruptions to TCAT routes in Collegetown and Downtown. Additionally, new Teagle Hall/Rice Hall campus construction projects were just announced that will impact/reduce two parking lots further. The recent move-in day A-Lot closures caused significant stress and disruption for my team. Parking and transportation are way more stress-inducing than I feel they should be, currently, for myself and my team.”

“I believe parking should be a top priority. With North campus losing so many spaces, students are now taking spots employees have always had. If we have to leave for an appointment and come back, a lot of the time there are no spaces so we have to take extra time to find a spot, which sometimes means parking farther away and waiting for a bus. It’s not fair for an hourly staff member to have to use more leave time because they had no place to park. I think student cars on campus should be limited to Sophomores and above.”

Some respondents cast doubt on recent assertions by Transportation officials that there is plenty of available parking.
“The message from Leadership multiple times has been that there is ample parking for employees. I disagree. If there is available parking, it is not easily found. To obtain a spot, one has to arrive earlier and earlier as competition increases. It is impossible to find a spot if one needs to attend an early appointment and arrives after 7:50am. There should be enough parking that it isn’t cut-throat. I often spend half an hour circulating the perimeter lots to then eventually have to pay for street parking and disrupt my work to move every 2 hours. With the news of future construction projects eliminating more parking, what do we do? If the opinion of the university is that there is plenty of parking, please provide some factual data on where these open spots were, what day of the week, what time of the year and the number available. If those who insist there is ample parking surveyed the area over the summer, or in the afternoon after facilities staff left for the day, it is not an accurate representation. Try 9am, mid week during the semester.”

“Transportation Services it seems doesn’t listen to commuting staff who have to park when they come to work. Ignoring a problem that’s hard to solve doesn’t make it go away, and telling commuting staff that they can’t park in the garage and have to park elsewhere doesn’t help because those staff when they go "elsewhere" can't park because those lots are full.”

“[The administration] needs to study parking and transportation in mid winter during the semester because that's when there's highest demand and shortest supply (due to snowbanks on parking spaces).”

Having to pay to park for work, especially given limited parking availability, is a tough pill to swallow and impacts lower-income staff disproportionately.

“The habitual taking of available parking coupled with the increasing costs are making it hard for people to even come to work, and is disproportionately affecting the lowest paid among us.”

I park a half mile away in the ME lot by the smokestacks and have to pay for it? I am an employee and am irritated every morning that I trudge into work, rain, shine, snow, sun. Insult to injury. Easy fix. Free [employee] parking for outer lots, like ME.

The administration should build more free peripheral parking lots (maybe out near the orchards?), and have regular bus service to central campus.

Me and almost all of Ithaca think it is criminal for Cornell Employees to pay for parking. Just because one campus is doing it doesn’t mean we need to do it. Everything else is great. Cornell has done very good things over the years.
Having to pay for parking is essentially a pay cut.

No one should ever have to pay to park on their employer's premises. Period.

In my opinion, I shouldn't have to pay to work. I understand that we work with limited space etc. but I am suffering (Yes, suffering) the same payment as someone making 4x more than me. Is there a way to bracket parking by income? Then again who would be the deciding factor in determining what I should pay?

Parking is difficult and too expensive. University should not essentially dock employee wages so that they can get to work. Sustainability is nice, but how about just telling the undergrads with their giant SUVs that they can't bring cars to campus? Suddenly there is lots of parking for staff, and Cornell looks good re: sustainability because it's keeping all those gas guzzlers off the streets of Ithaca. As a bonus, fewer cars in Ithaca might mean our streets deteriorate a bit more slowly? Win-win.

‘Unreliable’ TCAT system and lack of bus service from outside Tompkins Co. is a barrier to utilization of alternate transportation and free parking options, and makes intra-campus travel difficult

“I hear everyday complaints about the bus system and/or affordable parking. This is a big issue. TCAT buses have not been reliable when trying to get to work in time. Not sure the issue but it is frustrating as a staff member.”

“TCAT bus transportation is often unreliable. Making a daily commute into work unpredictable.”

“With missing/delayed bus routes, parking in A lot is becoming less and less of an option.”

“It is well known that there have been ongoing TCAT bus and driver shortages over the last few years. I know TCAT is doing what it can to mitigate these problems, but the shortages have caused a persistent strain on several of the routes. There are daily service alerts and notifications from TCAT that buses have been taken off of routes due to shortages. …”

“The University needs better connection between the campus and outlying areas (like the East Hill Office Building) so that it doesn’t require 30 minutes to go from one end of campus to the other.”
“Spouses who commute with one another, work across campus from one another or ‘the car’ need an easier method to get to ‘the car’ - not sure what this looks like? On demand shuttle?”

“It is still incredibly frustrating to have to pay to park where we work. Additionally, a public transportation option for those who live in Tioga County would be beneficial to many employees and could tie into sustainability initiatives.”

Staff are craving education, development and career growth opportunities

Consistently, staff members have highlighted a need for both professional development – in the form of training, workshops and conferences – and career growth opportunities. Several respondents expressed the need for training or cross-training just to keep up with job demands or fill gaps when short-staffed. Others expressed an interest in personal development opportunities, e.g. art classes, not just job-related ones, which could serve as a stress reliever and make for happier employees.

“In my opinion, the best way a company can show they genuinely care about their employees is by investing in their professional growth and development.”

“I know I would like to progress and grow in my role. Education and professional development would make me a more valuable employee.”

Continued training to keep up with quickly evolving tech and media platforms is critical for comms.

“I would like to see the Employee Assembly focus on both employee education and professional development, partnered with growth opportunities for staff. Learning should be a continuous process, but in order to keep staff motivated to learn, there needs to be opportunities for growth after the learning. My perception is that turnover is high, which is costly to the University, and I feel that by providing both the development and the opportunity for growth the University would do a better job retaining top talent.”

“I think Cornell’s employment culture can be improved with a greater focus on developing employee talents and skills, and connecting them to real and meaningful opportunities.”

“To encourage all departments to cross train and to provide options to assist employees with finding the best fitting jobs for them, and their talents.”

“I think that nearly ever staff member could use professional development both for their own good and for the good of the units in which they work. There are a lot of
development opportunities but I wonder if setting aside a certain number of hours per year to both encourage staff to pursue these (even if they aren’t directly relevant to their jobs) and give them the time and space to attend classes would be ideal.”

“…it would be nice if there were opportunities for employees to learn things that have nothing to do with their job. How about an art class or something just to make people feel good?”

Some staff members feel pigeon-holed in their current roles, or that the university is increasingly looking to external candidates to fill desirable positions, rather than promoting from within.

“It seems that there continues to be a lack of effort to promote from within. Succession planning and training individuals for the next step in their career isn’t happening. Rather than being prepared to hire internally into F-H level positions, external candidates are selected.”

“I am currently working in dining as a graduate student (not at Cornell) and have been trying to apply to low level jobs in my field. But it seems that no one is interested in investing in their employees and my jobs search often leads to experience requirements that are not doable to these lower positions. I would greatly appreciate the creation of an environment where the employee is valued as a person with a career rather than just a slot filler and Cornell helped them build their career.”

“continue to develop employees in their current role and develop for future roles we can promote from within”

“Please emphasize employee growth (promotions, being able to get new jobs that allow for professional and personal development.)”

“Professionals need knowledge & training to advance. Opportunities are few & far between. My concerns with this is if you do not have a degree, you automatically do not qualify. In some cases, a person has more professional knowledge than traditional education, but are eliminated immediately due to lack of a college degree.”

**Supervisor support is key to wellbeing and satisfaction**

Throughout last year’s Staff Conversations event series and in these poll results we heard that employees need support from supervisors when it comes to realizing work/life balance and taking advantage of wellness and education benefits.
“I think supervisors at all levels need to make work/life balance a priority, hire people to fill gaps that make this currently difficult, and provide on the clock opportunities to move (be active), learn (more turning points activities instead of two per year), be engaged (in the community) and be mindful.”

“There is a lot of talk about health and well being, but there is little support from managers and/or top administration to make it happen as a part of the real day to day schedules.”

“Well-being for staff should be a top priority, and supervisors should be held accountable for providing such healthy spaces.”

“So many employees come to Cornell excited to take advantage of the benefit allowing employees to take classes. However there are 2 major barriers: lack of supportive supervisors and lack of information.”

“I think there should be a greater sense of awareness and investment on professional development from managers in ALL fields across Cornell, regardless of their title or position. Many of the conversations I have had with people across campus have been as a result of feeling like they do not belong or that their managers see them as just one thing (administrative assistant, for example) and do not see them as developing individuals with the potential to be something greater.”

“While Cornell has a robust offering and support for professional development, it is hard to carve out the time to take courses. I’d like to see more admin support for giving staff time away from their daily duties to work on professional development”

Are the benefits good? Depends on who you ask

The most positive sentiments we saw in the comments were about benefits; overall, though, the feedback was inconsistent. For some, the benefits are good – even great – although there is room for improvement; others see benefits as lacking or lagging behind peers. Respondents provided specific feedback on vacation accrual, bereavement policy, retirement contributions and health insurance plans (note that this feedback was given prior to the rollout of the new vision and dental plans).

Several people highlighted the differences and perceived inequities between different staff classification groups – exempt vs non-exempt; endowed vs statutory. The fact that not all employees have the same benefit packages may account for the sharp contrasts in the comments. Contract College staff in particular expressed dissatisfaction with their benefits. One respondent also suggested that the university’s use of temporary and part-time positions has detrimental effects on staff with regard to benefits and pay.
“We have great benefits working at Cornell and I believe that the Employee Assembly should work to maintain those benefits.”

“I know that Cornell offers an amazing benefits package, it’s crazy to me that our dental and vision plans are so lacking.”

“The benefits seem strong for local community; however there seems to be little change / improvement on them. It would be great to see some new benefits and offerings available.”

“I have a hard time understanding why Cornell’s vacation time and retirement options (specifically the lack of a roth 403b) lag behind both Ivy peers and other universities in the state. It would be great to see these benefits be at least on par with other institutions.”

“Change the retirement contribution policy so hourly employees start receiving university contributions immediately, rather than having a two year waiting period. Exempt employees receive university contributions immediately, and so should hourly staff. If anything, hourly staff need the contributions even more, because they usually earn less money, than exempt staff and faculty.”

“It would be great if retirement and health insurance could be more equitable between contract and endowed colleges. When I worked for CS they matched 3% for my retirement, and the Aetna health insurance Healthy Living was a great option. Fewer medical offices accept the Empire Plan, among other disparities.”

“It's probably not something you can do anything about, but as a contract college employee, the fact that my health insurance deductible went up by $250 while my biweekly contribution went down by $4 means that I am actually out $150 total. This is especially true as my preferred doctor is OON.”

“Research a "Healthy Living" benefit for contract college employees similar to the endowed.”

“Benefits for Contract College employees are severely lacking and causing staff retention issues. One example of a lacking benefits between campus and non-campus staff is that although payroll runs through Cornell, Contract College employees were told the University would not run the New York State Paid Family Leave (NYPFL) program because it is ill-equipped. Instead it is optional for independent associations to facilitate which is nearly impossible without causing hardship. With all the money the University brings in, it would be nice to have a payroll system that is not archaic and to be able to
supply what the rest of the world considers a minimum standard of living, parental leave for all employees...not just some.”

“In my perspective there has not been equality in benefits for some employees.”

“Having just experienced the death of my partner, I strongly feel the Employee Assembly should work toward getting 5 days bereavement leave. Currently it is 3 days, and that is not enough time. It is my belief that this is an important issue that affects all employees, and having a full week to deal both emotionally and logistically with the loss of a loved one should be available. This also links up to Employee health and wellbeing.”

“Wellness designated rooms in buildings that have blood pressure monitor, scales, and needle waste bins for employees that need to take injectable meds or monitor blood pressure. Community resource page for staff.”

“My fiancé has maxed his vacation time it would mean a lot to our family if he could send his extra to me specifically and not into an anonymous pool.”

Hire people in such a way that gives them an option of a future at Cornell. Stop the temp positions, treat your temp and part time people fairly. And stop using temp positions as an excuse to be cheap AF with benefits and pay. We need to actually be able to live, and eat, and have shelter. I would love to not constantly live in fear that my position is drawing to an end and to not be forced to work multiple jobs just to stay afloat financially.

“Give everyone their birthday off as a benefit...it won’t shut down the university since everyone isn’t born on the same day and it would be gesture that means something to people than other things...TIME is a great gift!”

Perceived ‘impossibility’ of monetary recognition is a de-motivating factor

As a new supervisor, in a training session I received information from the central office regarding policies around pay, raises, bonuses (monetary recognition in general) that was so at odds with the pay climate in A&S. I can think of numerous examples of pay disparity among folks across a pay band/particular job family and position that just don't add up unless gender, age, and degree are taken into account (when a degree is not a requirement for the job). I know Cornell supposedly has a robust system for keeping tabs on this, but the impossibility of monetary recognition for merit in A&S can create a feeling of low motivation.”

Also, I’ve been told that Cornell strives to be market-mid for my job class with regards to salary, meaning, no matter how hard I work, they are going to strive to keep me as close to the market middle as possible. As a policy, this is demoralizing since it give managers an easy out to deny raises, year after year which stagnates professional growth.
Drastic budget cuts were made after the last recession. Everyone was asked to do more with less staff and to forego decent raises while doing it. Staffing levels and salaries, especially at the lowest tiers, have yet to recover, and with the constant threat of another recession, hope is fading.

Why do [paybands] exist if HR seems intent on only using the bottom third for most staff. When people are given additional work (which seems like the norm to me) they should be rewarded with increased pay.

“The EA should focus on keeping HR honest with regard to wage & compensation surveys and improving the annual SIP and bonus pool potential.”

Staff call for training, respect to improve campus climate and workplace culture

Some staff members expressed their disappointment in the current campus climate, pointing to high turnover in staff of color, staff members not feeling “safe” and the increased demand for staff counseling as indicators of a problem. Others suggested additional, possibly mandatory, training is needed in order to achieve a healthy campus climate. Respect – for supervisees; for lower-level employees; and for staff in general, relative to other constituent groups on campus, is mentioned several times as a concern.

“I think that we have a long ways to go at Cornell as far as inclusion.”

“HR has a lot of great programs that combine professional development and diversity training. They should be more widely available and it is especially important that they reach staff/faculty who would not normally seek it out. So i personally think that it would be appropriate to make them mandatory like the IDP training for incoming students during orientation.”

“Cornell is working diligently at the diversity and inclusion aspect, but there has been such an increase in the need for counseling of staff that it should be raising concerns/awareness that there is an underlying issue.”

“Having been here 3 months, I have noticed a really disappointingly high number of employees not feeling "safe" (their word, not mine) sharing their work, ideas, etc without fear of being corrected, second-guessed, or otherwise undermined. I see people holding back instead of putting their all into the work because of this.”

“There has been a high turnover in staff of color at the university, especially in positions in Dean of Students. So although the Dean is the leader in the effort to hold departments accountable for their metrics, how can that be done if their own unit is having issues of high turnover? Would like to see a plan in place, especially since this has been an
evolving concern since the Hurtado Report several years ago. Well-being for staff should be a top priority, and supervisors should be held accountable for providing such healthy spaces.”

“Anecdotally, retention of staff of color seems to be a problem here. Demonstrating appreciation for staff in general should be a top priority for EA, but I hear this is particularly a problem for staff of color, who can feel alienated and unsupported, operating in spaces where they perhaps are the only person of color and have to be the flag-bearer for all diversity-related issues. Cornell’s new diversity initiative, Belonging at Cornell, seems more concerned with the number of employees trained than it is with substantive work. These issues are problems at elite universities all over the country - it would be great to see Cornell really take on the difficult work it will take to change it.”

“Respect and climate are the basis for successful, productive, and fulfilled employees. Diversity and inclusion and belonging need to be part of our daily life at Cornell and not just a session or program we attend a couple of times a year. Let’s work together to make it a part of everyday life here at Cornell.”

“I feel there is a consistent lack of respect in how certain functional areas interact with others. Not tangible disrespect, but through unresponsiveness or being dismissive or otherwise unprofessional.”

“Employees are the last priority in most departments and by most of the central administration. They naturally focus on Faculty and Students and never fail to create a working group when those constituents have a concern...but rarely for the employees. They fail to realize we are (or could be) an integral part of the team. This is not fixed by having employee recognition events, but rather by faculty who have work experience in (not collaborations with) industry...something few of our faculty know much about and our students haven’t experienced yet. Our academics are used to 'best effort basis' not hard results where they can be fired for doing everything right but failing to meet the bottom-line. The latter perspective breeds respect for those who contribute rather than respect based on titles or salary levels. As a result, most staff do not believe they are treated with meaningful respect and therefore they just do their jobs...when they could actually add much more value to the end result. This, in turn, leads to less connection with the University and its goals.”

“Staff are often thought of as second class citizens. Do more for the same price. Issues of new staff coming in at higher salaries/rates than someone who has been here for years.”

“I would also say that 'respect' covers a lot of ground, and not just student/faculty. Staff are often forgotten in conversations about priorities, diversity, and climate. Is it possible to create an environment where everyone feels valued and not like pawns in a game or losers in a hierarchy?”
“Women at higher levels in Cornell abusing lower titled employees. Needs to STOP. They are not well-rounded people and then they are promoted over and over again. Why?”

Campus sustainability practices are falling short of ideals

Several respondents expressed concern and frustration that Cornell is not living up to its reputation and the values it espouses with regard to campus sustainability, including basics like recycling and conserving electricity. These staff members want the university to ramp up awareness and educational campaigns and to demonstrate a higher degree of thought leadership and innovation. Some urge more extreme action such as divestment, road closings.

“Cornell presents itself as an organization with a serious Green Initiative. Boots-on-the-ground reality, however, is quite a bit different. I regularly see recyclable items in the garbage. I have mentioned this many times to the Recycling organization on campus, but they feel that there is nothing they can do... “

“Cornell is always saying that they care so much about sustainability and then I see disposable coffee cups all over the place, hundreds of lights are on 24/7 in buildings, landfill/recycling/compost bins are constantly being contaminated/misused and thus all going to landfill, etc. If we are touting that we’re so good (and "carbon neutrality" by way of purchasing carbon offset credits is hardly true sustainability), then we ALL need to commit to this. It’s in all our job descriptions and we need to be held accountable.”

“It would be great if we could change the culture on campus to be more sustainable. This includes limiting the amount of plastics/non-compostable items used during events that involve food; making sure that food is not wasted or thrown out, but given to students or members of the community;”

“I'd like to see the EA actively involved in supporting efforts to educate Cornell staff about how to recycle, including the basics like how to dispose of typical waste that is generated in offices on campus.”

“Us folks over here feel generally excluded from most things that happen on Central Campus including when it comes to Sustainability efforts. I would love to get EHP setup to be Green.”

“Demand that the Board of Trustees divests from Fossil Fuels. All other sustainability initiatives are treading water.”

Comments by some sustainability advocates on the subject of transportation and parking seem to conflict with what other respondents reported regarding the difficulty and extra time necessary to take even a short TCAT ride from the A lot, and the limited availability of alternate transportation options from outside Ithaca.
Things employees can do relating to transportation - reducing all the cars and miles traveled on the daily commute and looking into reducing traffic on campus, too. Close some roads!

There is nothing to be said about parking and transportation! Alternative transportation options are available to those that seek them. With space for buildings and parking a constant battle and the perception to employees that the parking system is very rigid, that, in my opinion, would be an "up hill battle" toward improvement that only Transportation Services and Administration can fight.

Recognition is deserved, but staff are dissatisfied with current approaches

Respondents emphasized the importance of recognizing the hard work done by staff members; in particular, the support staff (often in the lower bands) who tend to fly under the radar. However, several respondents expressed frustration with the ways the university recognizes its employees. In the context of perceived stagnant compensation, a common sentiment was that the university should redirect its limited resources for recognition toward the SIP program, providing bigger raises to excellent staff members. Other recognition activities are viewed by some as a waste of money. The lack of visibility and limited adoption of the new Appreciation Portal also drew some criticism. One respondent emphasized the need to foster a culture of giving thanks.

*Loads of unsung heroes behind the scenes that help make Cornell and its constituents shine!*

“I think that all of the options are important, but given the current political climate, current events, and the hard work that employees put in day after day, it would be really nice to see elevated employee recognition. Something as simple as the lawn games on the quad this summer, having events like this on a regular basis (monthly) would be great.”

“There are many, many events to recognize students and faculty, but very few that recognize staff, other than the length of time they’ve worked here. With the growing number of younger staff on campus, the only way Cornell is going to retain these new hires is by showing some kind of recognition early on if they are doing a really good job. Younger generations are not going to wait around for 10, 20 or 30 year recognition awards for their service. They need feedback early on and they want to be noticed for the time and effort they put in to support students or faculty.”

“I’m wildly disappointed in the employee appreciation portal. I can’t believe Cornell spent money on condescending software rather than add to the SIP pool.
“Recognize employees with better pay raises”

“Superficial recognition programs which take a lot of time and money but doesn’t go into the pockets of real people. STOP doing parties; give more pay. A suggestion I am often making is never mind giving us granola bars and apples to tell us you value us as staff. Give everyone their birthday off as a benefit… it won’t shut down the university since everyone isn’t born on the same day and it would be gesture that means something to people than other things…TIME is a great gift!”

“The employee recognition system that was rolled out (the one where people could give each other kudos) seems like it debuted then just disappeared. No one I know uses it or talks about it or seems to understand what benefits it offers. If there was supposed to be points dished out to be spent at some sort of Cornell e-market, no one has heard of it happening.”

“Staff raises have been very small for a number of years. Focusing on improving staff compensation for those who have been consistently performing well would aid in retaining an excellent staff.”

“Annual cost of living increases have been really low for many years. Other costs are going up much more rapidly, and we are falling behind. There’s a lot that’s great about working at Cornell, including the benefits. But employees who work hard should be recognized with raises!”

“With everything going in the world today it would be worthwhile to have a positive distraction. We spend a lot of time identifying problems or being told about the problems that can’t be fixed. Taking a break to highlight some of the amazing accomplishments of staff has become more important than ever.”

“I would like to see future equity increases and performance be recognized. The staff have received minimum standard SIP for multiple years.”

“I know that there is a means of giving recognition, I have even received it, but couldn’t tell you off the top of my head how to do it. Even knowing about it, I find it intimidating to think about. When is it appropriate to give thanks, and when is it just someone doing their normal job… Should we be thanking people for doing their normal job? We have stickers in each bathroom on how to get help in the winter we display things like how to sneeze and cough. How about stickers everywhere about how to thank people. Right now, if a person is comfortable giving thanks then people they work with get recognized, but others, doing just as much or more, don’t. Let’s make everyone comfortable doing it. show what circumstances warrant it and give examples. I think making it part of the culture to say thanks will help with other topics on the list as well such as Campus Climate through respect and Employee Health and wellbeing since when people feel recognized and seen for what they contribute, they are happier at work.”
Staff want more communication and opportunities for community engagement

Several respondents expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input and be part of the conversation about issues affecting staff, and some referenced recent EA initiatives and events such as Staff Conversations and Lunchtime Lawn Games as good examples of the kind of engagement they want more of. Providing these opportunities helps staff feel valued and appreciated.

“Something as simple as the lawn games on the quad this summer, having events like this on a regular basis (monthly) would be great.”

“More options to engage outside of work with the community and local businesses. Perks, discounts, sponsored programs, free events.”

“I'd like to say ‘Communication’ but I'm not sure that the EA can help with this problem. I'm referring specifically to the lack of communication from the administration to the staff within the College of Business.”

“Please let's have more Mary Opperman meetings - Staff Conversations and Supervisor Updates were great and very useful last year. It was heartening to hear what an ally we have in Mary, and I for one, could use that boost a little more often.”

“I think it would be nice of at each staff meeting the HR person had something to share with the employees... Don't forget now is the time to change your tax information.... medical benefits package... For those getting close to retirement there is a seminar... Cornell offers opportunities for reduced home insurance... Financial planning...”

“Those in charge making the decisions need to be more aware and on top of the actual needs of employees and not just guessing what they think is best. Communication to ALL involved needs to improve!! Go outside the usual bubble and reach those who really need the information. Not just those who sit at a desk and use computers & phones all day.”

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Employee health and wellbeing:
- Offer mobile mammogram on campus
- Set aside some fitness classes or wristbands for staff
- Provide more health and wellness services that are separate from students.
- Extend health/wellness options like gym memberships to remote employees
• Provide employees university-mandated release time to attend a wellness class or workshop, so that the benefit is made available consistently across the university.
• Hold lunchtime exercise classes in several locations on campus
• Increase meditation and yoga offerings
• Research a "Healthy Living" benefit for contract college employees similar to the endowed
• Require healthy food options at all staff events
• Provide equitable fitness/wellness benefit for Geneva staff
• Wellness services in Collegetown

Parking and transportation:
• Investigate intra-campus transportation options to connect central campus with outlying areas and reduce travel time.
• Reduce student parking by restricting parking to sophomores and above and/or by expanding free bus passes.
• Partner with TCAT to help solve problems with planning or financial assistance.
• Convert B-lot, ME, EHOB and other outer parking areas to free lots for staff.
• Review and streamline Transportation Department processes such as waitlist administration and parking permit renewal.
• Find a new way of dealing with temporary overflow parking for weekday events.
• Investigate income-based fee structures for parking permits
• Make the intersection of Dryden Road and Hoy Road a 3-way stop
• Advocate for a public transportation option for those living in Tioga County

Education and professional development
• More cross training, more mentor opportunities to help fill in the gaps when those staff members retire or move on to another position
• Allow staff to participate in learning opportunities that are not necessarily job-related
• Mandate a certain number of hours release time for education and development, to ensure that all staff have the equitable opportunities.
• Digital dashboard that shows staff and supervisors the broad range of options available

Benefits
• Change the retirement contribution policy so hourly employees start receiving university contributions immediately, rather than having a two year waiting period.
• Require endowed employees to contribute a small percentage of their pay in order to get the match like the contract college employees do, to help prepare for retirement.
• Expand options for gifting vacation time, beyond the anonymous pool.
• Give staff the day off for their birthday.
• Provide equitable fitness/wellness benefit for Geneva staff
• Provide employees university-mandated release time to attend a wellness class or workshop, so that the benefit is made available consistently across the university.
Campus climate:
- Make diversity and inclusion training mandatory and more widely available
- Help build greater awareness of implicit bias

Sustainability:
- Increase educational opportunities on how to be “green”
- Conduct outreach to offices outside central campus, e.g. East Hill Plaza
- Create an on-campus (or nearby) recycling facility
- Make compost bins available in all buildings.
- Implement university-wide climate offsets for work-related travel
- Divest from fossil fuels
- Restrict availability of single-use plastics

Employee recognition
- Marketing campaign to create a culture of gratitude, show people how to thank others
- Recognize employees with better pay raises
- More events like Lunchtime Lawn Games

NEXT STEPS

This year’s Priorities Poll provided insight and perspective that the Employee Assembly will utilize to better represent the broader staff community. Moving forward, committee chairs will be given the detailed commentary from the poll and will work through the feedback within their committees. While we recognize that not all suggestions can be implemented (there are realistic constraints on what is possible), we hope to work closely with campus partners to address the issues highlighted by the respondents, with particular focus on employee health and wellbeing.
**Appendix: Data tables**

**2019 Priorities Poll Results**

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<td>2. Parking and transportation</td>
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<td>3. Employee education and professional development</td>
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**Communication preference (select all that apply)**

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<td>2. Campus news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In person, e.g. staff meetings, events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Signage on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. None of the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**2017 Priorities Poll Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parking and transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Diversity and inclusion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Employee education and professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Employee health and wellness</td>
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<td>6. Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Employee Recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Not sure</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>224</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>