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Chad Coates is 14th employee-elected trustee



Chad Coates, assistant dean of admissions and advising in the College of Arts and Sciences, was voted Cornell's 14th employee-elected trustee in an election held April 11-13. More than 1,300 staff members participated in the election.

Succeeding Alan Mittman, Coates will begin his four-year term July 1.

As assistant dean, Coates chairs admissions committees for undergraduate international applicants from the Caribbean, Latin America and Africa, and serves as academic adviser to a cohort of first- and second-year students. He is also administrative coordinator of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Program and leads the Prefreshman Summer Program and other diversity initiatives within the College of Arts and Sciences.

"I think the top three priorities for the board of trustees are: the appointment of a new president who advances Cornell's core values of respect, dignity and fairness for all employees; facilitation and creation of the new strategic plan for the institution that reflects Cornell's core values; and improvement of communication between the board and the Cornell community," said Coates. "I am very grateful and humbled to be elected as the employee trustee. I am excited for the opportunity to represent Cornell employees, and will strive to use my position as a trustee to improve Cornell by ensuring the board is informed and sensitized to the needs, experiences and perspectives of Cornell employees."

Pilar Thompson, vice chair for finance, Employee Assembly, extended her congratulations to Coates, saying, "His desire to inform the board of trustees regarding employee needs, experiences and perspectives falls in line with the work we do in the Employee Assembly. I look forward to working with him in bringing a voice to Cornell's employees."

As noted in his campaign statement, Coates engages with a wide cross-section of staff, faculty and community partners, both in

his daily job responsibilities and in the various boards on which he sits, including as a member of the Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) Board of Trustees. He is also a crisis manager for students, a house fellow at Carl Becker House and a volunteer for Into the Streets and active member of the CaribIthacans network.

B.J. Siasoco, Employee Assembly chair, said, “I’m excited for Chad and his election as employee-elected trustee. Cornell is a unique institution in its having an employee serve as a full voting member of its board of trustees. I am proud to be a part of that institution, and Chad’s experience in higher education will bring a great perspective to the board. I look forward to working with him.”

Coates brings an international perspective to his trustee role as well, having represented Cornell in Brazil and South Africa. He is interested in Cornell’s international partnerships and the ways in which the university is successfully positioned as a global brand, recognized for excellence in innovation and research, he noted in his campaign statement.

“Chad’s experiences in Arts and Sciences, shared governance and as a trustee at TC3 – among other fine attributes – make him well-suited to assume the employee-elected trustee position,” said Mittman. “I look forward to helping prepare him, as my successor, for this role, which I am confident he will fulfill exceptionally well.”

Jet Tila hosts Cornell Dining's first Cutthroat Competition; Rupe wins



Pans swirl. Knives flash. Hands, fast as lightning, grab spoons, pinch spices, pour liquids, stir solids. Four competitors from Cornell Dining’s staff battle the clock to make their favorite dishes.

And then Jet Tila – restaurateur, celebrity chef, judge on the Food Network’s “Cutthroat Kitchen” and emcee of Cornell’s first Cutthroat Competition – introduces a “sabotage” item. It might be that one of the competitors is required to use a mini-cookware set, or another must put their taco tortillas through a slicer or wear an oversized French mime suit while finishing a crepe. The sabotage item almost inevitably affects the dish’s final appearance.

In this three-round elimination contest, the competitors were asked successively to make their favorite breakfast, taco and crepes. As they finished each round, each dish for was judged by Max Aronson ’19 – former participant on the Food Network program “Chopped: Teen Redeem” competition – for presentation, flavor and resemblance to the item attempted. With each round, one competitor of the four – Adam June, Cook House Dining; Richard Rupe, Robert Purcell Marketplace Eatery; Terry Silba, North Star Dining; and Amber Deemer, Risley Dining – was eliminated, until only one, Rupe, remained.

About 150 students, staff and family members watched the competition April 11 in the Robert Purcell Community Center, cheering on their favorites and lining up for Tila's autograph.

The four competitors agreed that initially the event was stressful, but once they started cooking, everything fell into place.

"It's just like cooking in a restaurant with an open kitchen," Rupe said, drawing on his experiences in catering, fine dining and at Cornell. Even the sabotages did not faze him: "As in a restaurant, something always comes up, whether it is an ingredient you run out of, or a piece of equipment that fails. You have to work off the cuff."

"It was so much fun," said Deemer, the runner-up who says she grew up "glued" to the Food Network. "I love doing what I'm doing," she said of her work at Cornell.

"I learned everything I know from the chefs here," June said. He came to Cornell nine years ago with a background as a dishwasher. Silba had run a coffee shop in Johnson City, New York, until it was destroyed in a 2011 flood; in charge of everything at the coffee shop, she soon discovered she had a lot still to learn when she came to Cornell.

Regardless of their previous experience, all contestants exemplify what Cornell Dining is about, said executive chef Steve Miller. "We are committed to developing from within. The opportunities you have here – the trainings, the competitions, having Jet come – they are all part of that," he said.

This was Tila's second visit to Cornell. In 2011 he taught basic Asian cooking skills. "After he left, we thought it would be fun to invite him back for a competitive format," said Gail Finan, director of Cornell Dining. Holding the competition required a team effort. Harry Ashendorf, operations manager, noted, "We had at least eight front-line workers involved in organizing the ingredients and supplies, along with second-year culinary students from BOCES, as well as staff who helped clean up afterward."

Military/Veterans Resource Fair May 16

The Cornell University Veterans Colleague Network Group will host a Military/Veterans Resource Fair for the Cornell community and beyond, May 16, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in G10 Biotechnology Building.

Learn more about your benefits and perks as a veteran or military family member: the following organizations will be present to provide such information and resources as community services, VA benefits, health benefits, training and educational benefits and career opportunities with veterans and/or their family members:

- NYS Division of Veterans' Affairs/Regional Medical Center
- Tioga County Clerk's Office (Return the Favor Program)
- VA Medical Center Syracuse, NY
- Southern Tier Veterans Group
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Dryden, NY
- American Legion, Post 770 Trumansburg, NY
- Clear Path For Vets
- Institute of Veteran and Military Families at Syracuse University

Cornell Veterans' Working Group participants will also be available:

- Cornell Team and Leadership Center
- Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives/Trailblazers
- Cornell Small Farms Program
- Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment/Office of the University Registrar
- Veterans Colleague Network Group/Team Red, White, Blue
- Cornell Recruitment and Employment Center
- Gannett Health Services

Office professionals event focuses on gratitude, service

Not everyone in the audience of 600 received a door prize at the Jennie T. Farley Office Professionals Celebration April 20, but thanks to Cornell offices, local businesses and the Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau, about one in 10 did, winning hotel stays, gift baskets, and other goods and services. “If you were a winner, be sure to thank and give back to our local vendors,” said Marilyn Willkens, executive staff assistant to the vice president for human resources and co-chair of the event with Traci Morse, program coordinator of the Scheinman Institute at the [School of Industrial and Labor Relations](#) (ILR), and Kathleen Snyder, special events manager for the Office of the President.

Willkens asked audience members to share the roles Cornell has played in their lives, noting that without her first job at Cornell, she never would have met her husband. Others at the Barton Hall event shared how Cornell helped pay for child care and their children’s education; their careers; and how Cornell is a safe place to come out.

Showing gratitude and participating in public service were the central themes of the celebration. In opening remarks, Kevin Hallock, the Kenneth F. Khan Dean of the ILR School, thanked the office professional in his office, Theresa Woodhouse, for making his work as dean “better every single day.”

“She is careful, smart, organized, anticipates things and has remarkable judgment,” he said.

He noted the special meaning that the office professionals celebration has for ILR, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary: The late ILR faculty member Jennie T. Farley started the event with colleague Alice B. Cook in 1988 with a brown bag lunch.

Keynote speaker Mary Opperman, vice president and chief human resources officer, said Cornell’s office professionals are “all part of something very big,” because Cornell’s mission of “providing education, nourishing creativity, fostering important research and carrying out many forms of public service and public engagement” does “a lot of good work in the world.”

She continued, “That happens because of your work, your skills and your dedication to excellence in support of the academics who advance these efforts.”

Opperman said the late President Elizabeth Garrett believed in public service and was proud of Cornell’s land-grant mission to contribute to the public good. “So many of you, I know, share that kind of belief in community service,” Opperman said. “When you look around Tompkins County and surrounding communities, you’ll find Cornell students, faculty, staff actively engaged on a daily basis.”

Opperman drew attention to Eileen Whang, dependent care consultant in human resources, and Gary Stewart, director of community relations, who are, respectively, president and vice president of the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes. She also cited Laurie Miller, service learning coordinator for the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs, who serves on the board of the Child Development Council; Susan Riley, deputy director of community relations, whom Garrett appointed to boost the Cornell United Way campaign; and staff who participate in such activities as Women Swimmin’ for Hospicare, the Backpack Program and Cornell Elves.

Acknowledging the past year as difficult, Opperman said, “It can be helpful during these times to reach beyond ourselves. We can focus on what we have, not on what we don’t have, and we can be grateful for what we are to one another,” she said.

Opperman called Willkens and Diane Jacobson, administrative assistant, “rainbows in my cloud.” She also said she was grateful to “so many of you” who are “rainbows in somebody else’s cloud.”

“Thank you for all you do to make Cornell a great university, for all you do for our community, for our students and for each other,” she said.

Wellness contest draws 688

The 2016 “Spring into Action: Make Movement Matter” Wellness contest attracted 688 Cornell community members, comprising 138 teams variously named “Buns on the Run,” “Better Weight than Never,” “Waist Away,” “Drop the Fork,” “Excess Baggage,” “Thin It to Win It,” “Healthy Hotelies” and “CU@MyPace,” among others.

About 117 contest participants gathered April 11 in the Alice Statler Auditorium – with about another 50 online – to kick off the contest, with participants including on-campus staff members and staff from Cornell’s East Hill and Seneca Place offices in Ithaca, NY; Portland, NY laboratory; and New York City offices. Goals this year are self-selected among three categories: health (requires 150 minutes of some kind of activity each week), fitness (300 minutes of activity per week) or performance (600 minutes of activity each week). Activities can range from stretching or walking to workouts and sports.

“Last year we did the 150 challenge,” said Jennifer Bennett, wellness and fitness specialist for the Healthy Aging Program, “in which participants needed to log in at least 150 minutes of activity each week. For some, that was a great point of achievement, whereas others were logging in 1,200 minutes each week.” On average, the top 75 performers logged in about 600 minutes a week, so that number was used in setting this year’s performance level, she said.

Ruth Merle-Doyle, health and wellness specialist, explained, “We wanted everyone to feel challenged, but we also wanted to level the playing field by letting each individual set and meet his or her own goals. The contest is designed to be not about the most activity, but about participating and reporting.”

Kerry Howell, assistant director of Cornell Wellness, engaged the audience in reviewing the rules of the contest, after which Gina Chapman, a representative of the American Heart Association (AHA) from Binghamton, New York, presented Beth McKinney, Cornell Wellness director, with a [plaque recognizing Cornell as a gold-level Fit-Friendly Worksite](#). AHA gives this level of recognition to those employers who champion the health of their employees through innovative approaches to healthy lifestyle changes, including offering employees physical activity support, increasing healthy eating options at work and promoting a wellness culture. The award had first been [announced in January](#).

Two HR hires bolster focus on diversity, compliance

Angela Winfield, J.D. ’08, program manager at Cornell’s Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability (YTI) in the ILR School, has been appointed director of inclusion and workforce diversity in Cornell’s Division of Human Resources, effective May 2.

Also, Sarah Affel, currently lead Title IX investigator in the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations, has been appointed Title IX coordinator for the university. Both will report to Mary Opperman, vice president and chief human resources officer.

In YTI, Winfield coordinates the Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Center’s technical assistance activities, and she has participated in creating learning programs focused on the ADA throughout New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

An attorney at Barclay Damon LLP in Syracuse, New York, and a motivational speaker and coach, Winfield also has presented workshops and participated in panel discussions on diversity, disability, leadership, goal setting, women’s empowerment, and personal and professional growth. In October 2015, she was the keynote speaker at a half-day conference at Cornell in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ADA.

“Angela brings nearly a decade of legal experience and a background in diversity advocacy to this position,” Opperman said. “She approaches inclusion, accessibility and equity both from the perspective of the law and from their human dimensions and impact. That approach will serve the university well as she leads our workforce diversity and inclusion efforts.”

Serving as one of the university’s five diversity officers, Winfield will address and advise hiring managers, faculty and staff on workforce diversity legal compliance concerns.

Winfield also will partner with colleges and administrative units to provide diversity and inclusion educational programs.

“I am thrilled to serve in this capacity and look forward to helping advance workforce diversity and cultivating an inclusive climate that benefits all members of the Cornell community,” Winfield said.

Affel, who started at Cornell in September 2014 as an assistant judicial administrator, will focus on diversity and inclusion concerns related to the federal law Title IX. Enacted in 1972, Title IX is landmark federal civil rights law that prohibits sex discrimination in education.

Affel will lead efforts across the university to comply with Title IX and New York State Law 129-B (Implementation of Colleges and Universities of Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence and Stalking Prevention and Response Policies and Procedures), including coordinating and advising on education and outreach across campus.

She also will oversee the university’s response and investigation of complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking, including meeting with individuals who want to initiate a formal complaint; assessing the need for remedial or protective measures and imposing them as needed; and monitoring the progress and reporting the results of those complaints.

“I am delighted that Sarah has taken on this important role. Her experience and commitment will be vital to Cornell’s efforts to address and prevent issues that not only violate Title IX and New York State Law 129-B but our own campus community standards,” Opperman said.

After receiving her bachelor’s degree at Tufts University in 2005 and her law degree at the Northeastern University School of Law in 2008, Affel practiced law for three years in the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office in Woburn, Massachusetts. She was admitted to the New York Bar in 2015.

Affel has been on maternity leave and will begin working part time in her new role April 15.

“I look forward to working with the Cornell community to foster a safe, diverse and accessible educational environment where students, staff and faculty of all sexes, genders, sexual orientations and gender identities thrive,” Affel said.

Garrett memorial run, May 8

The [First Annual Elizabeth Garrett Memorial 5k: A Moment of Grace](#) will be held May 8, 10 a.m.-noon, looping through the Cornell Plantations. Check-in and race day registration opens at 8:30 a.m., with remarks in memory of President Garrett at 9:30 a.m.

Sponsored by the [Red Key Athlete Honor Society](#), this fun run is open to all students, alumni, faculty and friends.

[Registration \(\\$20\) open now through May 6.](#) The first 100 registrants will receive an event t-shirt. All proceeds will go to student scholarships in memory of President Garrett and the President Elizabeth Garrett Fund for Colon Cancer Research.