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24 staff members graduate with higher ed degrees



Thomas O’Toole, executive director of the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs, and a Cornell staff member for the last dozen years, embodied the word grit by simultaneously working and earning a doctorate in the field of government from the Graduate School.

And Wendy Treat, administrative support coordinator for engaged learning and research for 28 years, persevered through her associate in applied science degree in business administration from Tompkins Cortland Community College while working full time as a single mom and taking 18 credits in her last semester.

In total this year, 24 Cornell staff members earned an associate, bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree through Cornell’s Employee Degree Program or the Tuition Aid Program.

Their accomplishments were celebrated at the 20th Annual Staff Graduate reception May 24 in the Robison Hall of Fame Room in Friends Hall.

Interim President Hunter Rawlings was on hand to congratulate the graduates and said it is incumbent on Cornell to provide the opportunity for staff members to continue their education.

“We’re an academic institution, and we should make sure our employees get some support in order to improve their education and in some cases achieve things they couldn’t achieve without a further degree,” he said.

Mary Opperman, vice president and chief human resources officer, also lauded the graduates.

“We have degrees – from associate degrees through graduate degrees – represented here today, and it demonstrates what I’ve always known, which is that the staff at Cornell are a committed bunch. You have found time in your day to balance your families, your work, and your interest and passion in learning,” she said.

A total of 19 staff members earned Cornell degrees:

- Tyler Anderson, M.Eng., research support specialist in Biological and Environmental Engineering;
- Rebecca Brunner, M.S., former developmental editor and course developer at the Lab of Ornithology;
- Matthew Cochran, M.M.H., assistant director of Cornell Catering;
- Adam Davis, M.P.A., extension support specialist at the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research;
- Sean Hayes, M.B.A., information technology project manager at Student Services Information Technology;
- Kristen Holeck, M.S., a research support specialist in the Department of Natural Resources;
- Curtis Josey Jr., M.Eng., research associate in the University Audit Office;
- Corri Levine, M.S., technician in Clinical Sciences;
- Fredrika Loew, M.A., collections assistant in the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections;
- Nicole O’Connell-Avery, B.S., veterinary technician at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals;
- Kyle Oliveira, M.Eng., systems administrator at Cornell Information Technologies;
- Thomas O’Toole, Ph.D., executive director of the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs;
- Laurel Kiorpes Parker, M.P.S., equal employment opportunity consultant in Human Resources Policy and Labor Relations;
- Deborah Paul, B.S., administrative assistant in the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid;
- Aleksandra Perelman, M.P.S., finance specialist in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Office of Academic Programs;
- Lauren Ryder, M.R.P., assistant director of reunion giving for the Cornell Annual Fund;
- Ruth Torres, B.S., financial aid associate in the Office of Financial Aid;
- Dhia Abed Waheed, M.A., custodian in Infrastructure Properties and Planning; and
- Joe Williams, M.P.S., web designer in the Yang-Tang Institute in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

Five staff members earned degrees from other colleges or universities:

- Carrie Baldwin-SoRelle, M.S., Syracuse University, gift associate for Alumni Affairs and Development;
- Samantha Miller, B.S., SUNY Empire State College, financial aid counselor in the Office of Financial Aid;
- Wendy Treat, A.A.S., Tompkins Cortland Community College, administrative assistant for engaged learning and research;
- Susan Whitaker, B.S., SUNY Empire State College, office manager for Cornell Dining Administration; and
- Tara Woodard, A.A.S., Tompkins Cortland Community College, office manager in the School of Operations Research and Information Engineering.

Biographies of the staff graduates were read by employee-elected trustee Alan Mittman and Employee Assembly Chair BJ Siasoco; Fred Callaway ’16 provided keyboard music for the event.

The reception was hosted by the Employee Assembly and the Division of Human Resources.

ILR recognizes faculty, staff achievements

At the ILR School’s annual Employee Recognition Ceremony May 20 in Ives Hall, staff and faculty recognized 29 staff members celebrating a 5th-year anniversary (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years) of Cornell service; five faculty members receiving ILR Resident Faculty Awards; and two staff members receiving Employee Recognition Awards. Also recognized was Aliqae Geraci, who won the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Librarianship for 2015-16.

Kevin Hallock, the Kenneth F. Kahn ’69 Dean of ILR, presented Allison Elias, visiting assistant professor, and Michael Gold,

associate professor of labor relations, law and history, with the MacIntyre Award for Exemplary Teaching.

William Sonnenstuhl, associate professor of organizational behavior, and Kate Bronfenbrenner, director of ILR Education Research and senior lecturer, received this year's Robert N. Stern Award for Teaching and Mentoring. Marya Besharov, associate professor of organizational behavior, received the General Mills Award for Exemplary Graduate Teaching.

Mary Garin, graduate programs coordinator, and Sam Nelson, director of forensics and senior lecturer of labor relations, law and history, received Employee Recognition Awards.

Celebrating 5-year service anniversaries were Laura J. Haley, Maria S. Hopko, Katherine J. Solis-Fonte, Michael W. Ward and Joseph R. Williams; 10 years: Legna J. Cabrera, Donald J. Kenyon, Laura Robinson and Ian Michael Schachner; 15 years: Renee Laree Cook, Dianna Dean-Tucker, Sariena Mai Lamb, Camille Gynsun Lee, Francis J. Peters, Michael Radzick, Stacy J. Reynold and David A. Yantoro; 20 years: Daniel Elswit, Cynthia E. Hayes, Anuradha Lyons and Sherrie Morales; 25 years: Traci Lynn Morse and Jeffrey Teeter; 30 years: Laura A. Lewis and Michele Elaine Secord; and 35 years: David G. Lippincott and Joan M. Roberts.

Employee Assembly announces new officers, members

The newly expanded 2016-17 Employee Assembly (EA) met June 1 to elect officers. The new chair of the EA is Ulysses Smith, lead diversity and inclusion strategist in the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity.

Outgoing chair B.J. Siasoco, associate director for Young Alumni Programs, was elected executive vice chair.

Other executive board positions were filled as follows:

- Vice chair of internal operations: Pilar Thompson
- Vice chair of communications: Liz Field
- Vice chair of finance: Shelly Cowles
- Parliamentarian: Hazel Hall

All other EA members were asked to consider leading or serving on one of the standing EA committees, including the Education, Personnel Policy, Communications and Staff Recognition and Awards Committees.

As announced in the Employee Assembly Update on May 2, the EA spent the past two years reviewing its composition and amending its charter to reflect the new representation model approved by the president last fall. The "New EA" increased its body from 19 to 28 staff members to better represent the various voices of Cornell employees. In its first call for applications to run for an EA seat, all 25 staff members who responded were seated and will represent specific constituent groups.

Representing academic colleges and units, staff units and affinity-based perspectives, the 2016-17 EA members are:

- Kristy Long – Arts and Sciences representative
- Tamara Payne – Agriculture and Life Sciences representative
- Kristine Mahoney – Human Ecology representative
- BJ Siasoco – ILR representative
- Babatunde Ayanfodun – Graduate School / Law School / Johnson Graduate School of Management representative
- Michelle Stefanski-Seymour – Veterinary Medicine representative
- Matthew Carcella – Alumni Affairs and Development representative
- Imani Allen – Campus life representative
- Kevin Fitch – Health and safety representative
- Carrie Sanzone – University Relations representative
- Tanya Grove – Human Resources representative
- Laura Johnson-Kelly – Library/ Museum representative
- Hazel Hall – Facilities representative

- Jeremy Kruser – Research / Technology representative
- Kathy Shields – Financial Affairs representative
- Liz Field – Administration representative
- Shelly Cowles – Geneva representative
- Pilar Thompson – International representative
- Linda Majani – Diversity representative
- Tammy Shapiro – Women’s representative
- Ulysses Smith – LGBTQ representative
- Robert Morris – Veterans representative
- Atu Darko – Less than five years of service representative
- Suzanne Willcox – Exempt representative
- Brandee Nicholson – Nonexempt representative

To view member profiles, or for more information about the EA, see <http://assembly.cornell.edu/Elections/2016SpringEmployee>.

All Cornell employees are welcome to contact any of the EA members with concerns or questions or to express interest in serving on an EA committee – or to e-mail the EA at assembly@cornell.edu. Staff members are welcome to attend EA meetings – the EA meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, 12:15-1:30 p.m. in 401 Physical Sciences Building. See the [EA home page](#) for more information.

Wellness contest participants move 1.4 million minutes



Thanks to the Cornell University Wellness Program’s “Spring into Action: Make Movement Matter” contest, 688 members of the Cornell community logged in 1.4 million minutes of physical activity over a six-week period, April 11-May 22. That is more than 23,200 hours of exercise.

Of the 138 teams participating, 16 scored “perfect attendance.” Minutes moved each week by all teams combined averaged about 234,000.

Winning in the category of those participating to improve their health was Pamela Tan, director of admissions in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and member of the team, “Won’t Be Denied.” “It was so much fun to do this with my colleagues,” she said.

The fitness category winner was Amanda Massa, associate director of student and young alumni programs, from the division of Alumni Affairs and Development, participating in the team “Band of Gypsies.”

Marin Cherry, undergraduate programs coordinator for food science and viticulture and enology and member of the team “Foodies for Fitness,” was the performance category winner.

The winning team for perfect attendance was “Getting Dino Sore,” comprising Adam Moody, Cornell community member; Amy Larson, graduate student; Jennifer Wierman, graduate student; and Philip Gordon, graduate student.

“We were able to engage new participants and allow them all to find way to challenge their activity level and be competitive,” said Jennifer Bennett, wellness and fitness specialist in the Wellness Program. “We find that our contests bring awareness to participants about their current activity levels and finding fun and easy ways to fit more movement into their already busy lives.”

Pine Tree Road to close June 13 through Aug. 18

Pine Tree Road between Maple Avenue and Route 366 will be closed to all traffic from June 13 to Aug. 18. Some lane closures may occur outside this period. Most remaining work will be completed by Sept. 30, and the project will finish up in early November.

This collaborative effort among Tompkins County, the town of Ithaca and Cornell University will remove the railroad bridge and replace the pedestrian bridge structure over Pine Tree Road, construct a 10-foot-wide multiuse path between Maple Avenue and Dryden Road, and improve access to the East Ithaca Recreation Way.

The project will also improve conditions for drivers by widening the road and shoulder underneath the pedestrian bridge.

The [vehicle detour route](#) will use Ellis Hollow Road, Game Farm Road and Route 366. Part of the East Ithaca Recreation Way near construction will be closed during the project. [TCAT](#) will adjust affected bus routes.

This project is being led by Tompkins County’s [Jeff Smith](#) and managed by [Greg Miller](#) of Barton and Loguidice and Cornell’s [Reed Huegerich](#).

Opperman thanks staff for Commencement efforts

In an article in the [Cornell Chronicle](#) by Blaine Friedlander on the rain and historic heat present during Commencement 2016, Mary Opperman, vice president and chief human resources officer, recognized staff members’ efforts:

“The hundreds of Cornell volunteers – and staff who worked many, many hours – went above and beyond this year,” she said. “They spent their weekend away from their own families, were very hot, very wet and ultimately very tired, but they came through so that our students and their families had the best possible experience. In the face of such weather adversity, we appreciate their efforts all the more. I want to thank them, as they are true troopers. And I want to give a special shout-out to Connie Mabry [director of University Commencement Events] who makes Cornell Commencement happen every year.”

See [Class of '16 storms through rain, historic heat to graduate](#) for the full article.

Downtown Ithaca welcomes Cornell Store

The Cornell Store will officially open on the Ithaca Commons at 102 East State Street June 9 at noon. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held with remarks from Mayor Svante Myrick and representatives of the City of Ithaca, The Downtown Ithaca Alliance and Cornell University. The community is invited to attend.

The Cornell Store on The Ithaca Commons features 1,700 square feet of retail space which will include Cornell clothing, gifts, Cornell-produced dairy and food items, with additional merchandise coming soon. “We are excited to now be a part of the downtown community and expand our services to local customers, tourists, and visitors,” said Fred Piccirilli, director of The Cornell Store.

Jody Marnell, branch stores manager for The Cornell Store, will supervise the new store on the Ithaca Commons.

The Cornell Store on the Ithaca Commons will be open seven days a week. For store hours, visit: store.cornell.edu. During Opening Weekend, June 9-12, customers will receive 10 percent off their purchase and a free Big Red Reusable Bag with any purchase.

The Cornell Store on the Ithaca Commons will create several new full-time and part-time jobs, and be on the tax rolls, as is the Cornell Store’s Shops at Ithaca Mall location.

For more information about The Cornell Store visit store.cornell.edu.
