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Martha E. Pollack, provost at Michigan, named 14th president



The Cornell University Board of Trustees Nov. 14 unanimously elected Martha E. Pollack, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Michigan, Cornell's 14th president. Pollack will assume the presidency April 17, 2017.

The board's vote followed the selection of Pollack by a [Presidential Search Committee](#) that was formed in April 2016 following the death on March 6 of President Elizabeth Garrett. Hunter R. Rawlings III, who has served as Cornell's interim president since April 25, will remain in his current role through April 16, 2017.

"I am humbled and honored to have been elected to lead this great university," Pollack said. "As a private university with a public mission, Cornell is the embodiment of my own deeply held belief in the ability of knowledge to improve the human condition. I can't wait to get started, and I look forward to meeting and working with Cornell's outstanding faculty, students, staff and alumni in Ithaca, New York City and around the globe."

"I am delighted to welcome Martha Pollack as Cornell's next president," said Robert S. Harrison '76, chairman of the board of trustees. "She is the perfect person to take the helm of Cornell at this important moment in our history. She has successfully managed a comparably complex institution and is a bold thinker who will inspire our faculty and students in Ithaca and across all of our campuses; her academic background in computer science will serve us extremely well as we open the Cornell Tech Roosevelt Island campus next year; and her familiarity with the issues facing academic medicine will be invaluable as we continue to grow Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City."

Pollack was appointed to her current position at the University of Michigan in 2013. As the university's chief academic officer

and chief budget officer, she is responsible for the academic enterprise, which serves more than 43,000 students with over 16,000 faculty and staff, has annual operating revenues of \$3.4 billion, and includes 19 schools and colleges, a number of freestanding research units, libraries and museums, and an array of academic support units. She also oversees the academic programs, ensuring that they maintain the highest level of quality and a persistent commitment to diversity and equity, and that the university's administrative functions are aligned with its academic mission.

Prior to becoming provost, Pollack served the University of Michigan as vice provost for academic and budgetary affairs, dean of the School of Information, and associate chair for computer science and engineering in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. She has been on the faculty at Michigan since 2000.

At Cornell, Pollack will have tenured appointments in the Departments of Computer Science and Information Science. She currently serves on the Steering Committee of the Jacobs Technion-Cornell Institute, the academic partnership between Cornell and the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology at Cornell Tech.

A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Association for Computing Machinery and the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), Pollack's research has been in the area of artificial intelligence, where she has published widely on topics including automated planning, natural-language processing, temporal reasoning and constraint satisfaction. A particular focus of her work has been the design of intelligent technology to assist people with cognitive impairment, a topic on which she testified before the United States Senate Subcommittee on Aging. Her research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, Intel, DARPA and the Air Force Office of Scientific Research.

In addition to receiving a number of awards for her research, she has been honored for her professional service, for example, with the University of Michigan's Sarah Goddard Power Award in recognition of her efforts to increase the representation of and climate for women and underrepresented minorities in science and engineering. She has served as editor-in-chief of the Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research, as president of AAAI, as a member of the Advisory Committee for the National Science Foundation's Computer and Information Science and Engineering Division, and as a member of the board of directors of the Computing Research Association.

Before joining the University of Michigan, Pollack was a professor at the University of Pittsburgh and a member of the technical staff at SRI International. Pollack received her bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College, completing a self-designed interdisciplinary major in linguistics. She earned her M.S.E. and Ph.D. degrees in computer and information science from the University of Pennsylvania.

She has been married for 32 years to Ken Gottschlich, an engineer and jazz musician by training. They have two grown children, Anna and Nicholas.

"The search committee set out to find a bold and strategic leader who would engage the entire Cornell community in furthering the university's core mission," said Jan Rock Zubrow '77, chairman of the Executive Committee of the board of trustees and of the Presidential Search Committee. "In Martha Pollack, we have found that person, and more. Recognized for her collaborative leadership style, she is uniquely qualified to bring together Cornell's outstanding colleges, schools and campuses to elevate and align the entirety of our great university."

Zubrow led a search committee of 19 individuals representing a cross-section of Cornell constituencies, including trustees, faculty members, undergraduate and graduate students, employees, senior administrators, and alumni. The committee was advised by two former board chairs and a former chair of the Weill Cornell Medicine Board of Overseers.

"I congratulate Jan Rock Zubrow and the search committee for their outstanding choice of Martha Pollack as Cornell's 14th president," said Rawlings. "As president of the Association of American Universities, I had an opportunity to work with Martha. She will be a great president, and her hands-on knowledge of Cornell Tech will help to solidify the growing collaborations and synergies among Cornell's upstate and downstate campuses. I look forward to working with her over the coming months on a smooth transition."

Nelson Roth receives grand prize; Cynthia Sedlacek, people's choice

FIRST PLACE

SECOND PLACE

HONORABLE MENTION

Two photographs entered in the 2016 Pawprint Photo Contest have risen to the top: the judges' choice, Nelson Roth's "Weekend in Havana" won Grand Prize among the 10 first-place winners; Cynthia Sedlacek's "Symphony of Feathers" (above) received the most votes campus-wide for People's Choice.

Out of 212 votes across campus, Sedlacek's "Symphony of Feathers" received 96 votes. "Star's above Sage" received 24 votes and "Weekend in Havana" received 21.

First-place winners for each category, according to the judges, were: Nelson Roth, Adults ("Weekend in Havana"); Cynthia Sedlacek, Animals ("Symphony of Feathers"); Holly Faulkner, Cornell ("Stars above Sage"); Lu Huang, Humor ("Lining Up"); Barbara Friedman, Landscape ("LaCorbiere"); Megan Joyce, Nature ("The Road Less Traveled"); Sue Brightly, New Entrants ("Grace"); Sachin Gupta, Special Effects ("No one else wants to meet with me"); Lucrezia Herman, Structures/Buildings ("Skylight"); and David Russell, Unspecified ("Fireboat").

Each first-prize entry then became eligible as a people's choice entry. All first-place winners will be notified of their winning by email, and will be able to pick their prizes up from the Pawprint staff, starting Dec. 1 (after the Thanksgiving break) at 312 College Avenue.

Placing second in each category were: Lu Huang, Adults; David Russell, Animals; Darko Alikalifa, Cornell; Cynthia Sedlacek, Humor and Nature; Megan Joyce, Landscape; Mary MacAusland, New Entrants; Kenneth Stuart, Special Effects; Deborah Littlejohn, Structures/Buildings; Tim Gallagher, Unspecified. Runners-up will be mailed a Cornell calendar, compliments of University Photography.

Receiving honorable mention were: Barbara Morley, Adults; Deborah Littlejohn, Animals and Special Effects; Barbara Friedman, Cornell and Nature; Cynthia Lamb, Humor; Darko Alifalfic, Landscape and Unspecified; Ilana Carlin, New Entrants; and Peter Cody Fiduccia, Structures.

In Appreciation

Thanks to all who contributed to the contest, including the winners, runners-up and those who deserve honorable mention. A total of 175 photographs by 62 photographers was submitted. The three most competitive categories were animals, landscape and nature.

A special thanks to those who sponsored the contest and contributed prizes:

- Athletics and Physical Education, for season gift certificates to men's and women's basketball, women's hockey and men's lacrosse
- Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, for a variety of gifts, including birdwatching answer book, travel mug and complimentary Lab of Ornithology membership
- Cornell Concert Series complimentary tickets
- University Communications, for a framed reproduction of the winning photograph
- Gannett Health Services, for a first-aid kit
- Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, for a complimentary family membership; gift book of art, "JapanAmerica: Points of Contact, 1876-1970"; and other items

- Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts, for four performance tickets
- Student and Campus Life, for six Cornell Dining lunch passes
- Taverna Banfi, for Sunday Brunch for two
- Transportation Services, for a Campus-to-Campus round-trip gift certificate
- Cornell Orchards, for a mug, honey and chocolate
- University Photography, for a complimentary studio portrait and 2016 Cornell Calendars.

Thanks also to this year's judges and to the many staff and faculty who participated in the People's Choice selection.

Six staff members receive awards for excellence

Interim President Hunter Rawlings and Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Mary G. Opperman recognized six award recipients – out of nearly 100 nominees – at the fourth annual [High Five Employee Recognition Award](#) Luncheon Nov. 7. Attending were many nominees, their guests and supervisors, and those who nominated them.

“The people we recognize today are not only skilled in the narrow sense of their specific job description, but they are also skilled in shaping the work environment for their colleagues,” Rawlings said. “They collaborate, they engage and they motivate the people who are around them.”

Two staff members were recognized for individual excellence, two for management excellence, and one received the President's Award for Excellence.

A new award, the President's Award for Innovation in Diversity and Inclusion, was given to Marc Magnus-Sharpe, the Lindseth Director of Cornell Outdoor Education.

“Our employees come from all walks of life. They are an incredibly diverse group,” said Rawlings. “We are committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce in all respects.”

Magnus-Sharpe is known for recruiting and hiring practices that advance diversity within his unit, said Opperman. Magnus-Sharpe also has worked with Cornell's Precollege Program to connect with more than 200 students from diverse backgrounds, and he led efforts to raise more than \$800,000 to renovate and upgrade the Lindseth Climbing Center, she said.

The Individual Excellence Award is given to staff members who are dedicated to the university's values, positively impact their work environment, are flexible and motivated, and foster collaboration. It was awarded to Richard Clark, manager of facilities for Molecular Biology and Genetics, and Vince Kotmel, physics undergraduate lab manager.

Clark's nominators said he is known for his can-do attitude, his good nature, his ability to solve problems and his willingness to help with any project, including decommissioning labs. He is “one of the most conscientious staff members I have known,” said one.

Kotmel is known for his kindness and the support he gives to more than 40 professors and senior lecturers. He has been involved in several outreach programs, such as the Mad Scientists' Week at the Ithaca Child Care Center Camp and Cornell's Bring a Child to Work Day.

The Management Excellence Award was given to Holly Potter, manager for on-campus recruiting and corporate client services at Johnson, and Robert Van Brunt, administrative manager for the Department of Romance Studies. This award is given to those who are dedicated to Cornell's values, create an inclusive environment, are problem-solvers, and act with foresight and

professionalism, said Opperman.

Potter is known for her commitment to work/life balance for employees. She “genuinely cares about the students, faculty and staff,” and is seen as a “true ambassador of the career management center and Johnson student services as a whole.”

Van Brunt is known for recruiting “the best people possible” and giving them the support they need; coordinating and leading meetings among faculty; and has proven that “a respected leader is someone who respects others in return.”

The President’s Award for Excellence, “Far Above Cayuga’s Waters,” is given to leaders at all levels who “live the university values; demonstrate inclusiveness, collaboration and respect; and further the university’s mission through their strategic planning and leadership,” said Opperman.

Lisa Yager, executive staff assistant in the president’s office, received the award. She is known for her ability to handle complex tasks with “quiet grace, confidentiality and the ultimate level of competence”; for handling multiple tasks simultaneously; and for “her care and attention to others.”

“We value the talents, ambition and knowledge of our staff because those qualities are key to making Cornell a great place to learn, conduct research and work,” said Opperman. “It’s very rewarding for me to have this opportunity to recognize such exceptional staff members.”

Academic calendar under review; input sought

Should Cornell’s academic calendar remain as is or be changed? Are breaks and study days optimally positioned to bring out the best in the students? Should the spring semester start earlier in order to create more summertime employment and academic opportunities for students? Should Commencement Weekend be moved?

The [Academic Calendar Committee](#), co-chaired by Charles Van Loan, dean of the university faculty, and Rebecca Stoltzfus, vice provost for undergraduate education, held its first meeting Oct. 24 to grapple with these issues. The committee is actively seeking input from students, faculty, staff and the assemblies; it also intends to reach out to local school districts to gain an understanding of their calendars.

Comments can be submitted at the [Academic Calendar Committee website](#). The site breaks out commenting into 12 areas, such as final exam scheduling; positioning and value of breaks; and importance of synchronizing Cornell breaks with local school district breaks. All comments are visible but are posted without names or email addresses.

“We are casting our net widely because the academic calendar touches each member of the Cornell community, and any change has an impact and can have unintentional consequences,” said Van Loan. “We all think differently about spring break, about having Commencement on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, about the start and end dates of each semester.

“We are hoping that the feedback we receive – which we will share in summary form with the Cornell community – will provide ‘teachable moments’ for each of us, helping us all to appreciate others’ perspectives as we move forward.”

In 2013 the academic calendar was revised to address concerns about student stress and mental health related to having long periods of instruction unpunctuated by multiday breaks; enhance educational opportunities; and comply with New York State Education Department requirements. In addition, the faculty Senate passed a resolution requiring the academic calendar be subject to periodic review, the first to be taken three years after the revised calendar was implemented.

The committee plans to gather input this semester and present a recommended calendar to the faculty Senate by April 2017. Following approval by the Senate, the recommended calendar goes to the provost, who decides if any changes are implemented. A new calendar is not likely to take effect before the 2018-19 school year.

Committee members include faculty; representatives from all the assemblies; and staff from the Dean of Students Office, student services, Gannett Health Services, University Registrar, Office of Institutional Planning and Research, and the

Free estate planning clinic for those with limited income

Cornell Law School is holding its second annual Estate Planning Clinic in the Spring of 2017. As it did last year, the clinic will assist those who do not have access to an estate planning attorney and will provide clients with a basic estate plan that includes a last will and testament, a living will, a healthcare proxy and power of attorney, tailored according to the client's wishes.

Law students will prepare and finalize these documents under the supervision of attorneys who specialize in trusts and estates.

Clients must meet income eligibility guidelines, as this service is free of charge. The income limits are as follows:

- Planning for a single person: client earns less than \$30k annually
- Planning for a family: client earns less than \$50k annually.

Clients should be aware that this service requires at least two visits to meet with students at the Law School (on the Ithaca campus). In addition, once chosen to participate, clients will be expected to sign a written commitment to follow through with appointments, giving at least 24-hour notice if an appointment will be missed.

Spots are limited, so if you are interested and meet the income guidelines, email Susan Tosto at slt29@cornell.edu to be placed on a list. Notifications of client selection will go out in early January, 2017.
