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Pollack recognizes staff for service, contribution



More than 380 staff were honored by Cornell President Martha E. Pollack and Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Mary Opperman at the 62nd annual Service Recognition Dinner June 21 in Barton Hall.

The event recognized the dedicated service of Cornell University's long-term staff celebrating a fifth-year milestone anniversary of 25 years or more.

"I've been here myself for two months, and all of you honorees have been here at least 25 years – that is really spectacular and such an enormous contribution to the university's mission," said Pollack. "The skills you have developed and the experience you have gained are hugely valuable to Cornell and to everybody who works with you."

She continued: "Cornell University is known around the world for its high quality of education, research and outreach – but really and truly, none of those things could happen without you. You deserve the most rewarding and supportive working environment we can create."

Pollack recognized three staff members who served 45 years:

- Susan Branch, administrative assistant in the Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine;
- Linda Johanson, managing editor of the Administrative Science Quarterly in the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management; and
- Linda Pearce Kabelac, stewardship major gifts officer in Alumni Affairs and Development.

Also recognized were 39 staff members with more than 40 years of service but not celebrating a fifth-year milestone, and those who retired or will retire this year.

Noting the many ways in which staff contribute to the life and activities of the university, Opperman said: “Cornell’s reputation for excellence relies on the successful partnership between our faculty and you – our extraordinary staff. As we support our students, many of whom go on to be tomorrow’s leaders, each of us in our own way contributes to their educational experience.” She also thanked the friends and families of awardees for supporting them.

“Together, our awardees this year represent more than 10,000 years of Cornell experience,” she said. “We certainly could not keep our campus running day in and day out without your hard work.”

The evening featured a singing performance by Mark Lawrence, web and information systems manager for the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future.

As Opperman noted some national and Cornell highlights from the years that awardees began working at Cornell, the BackTalk Band provided popular musical selections from each era.

Ashley Fazio is director of communications in the Division of the Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer.

Summer Scoop takes edge off a sweltering summer

The line was out the door for a sweet treat on a hot summer afternoon as the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S) celebrated Summer Scoop on June 23. More than 1,000 visitors came to Stocking Hall to enjoy free Cornell Dairy ice cream at the annual event, now in its 16th year.

Volunteers from across CAL S scooped eight different flavors, including BOORange Chip, a signature flavor made in honor of CAL S dean Kathryn J. Boor. Other favorites like Bavarian Raspberry Fudge and Big Red Bear Tracks, as well as a non-dairy sorbet, were available at the popular summer event.

“[It’s] a great way to celebrate summer and CAL S,” said Boor of the ice cream. “My favorite, of course, is still BOORange Chip.”

Last year the Cornell Dairy became the first college dairy in the country [to be kosher certified](#). Along with ice cream, Cornell Dairy produces fresh milk, cheese, yogurt and other dairy products on campus, and [operates a co-op](#) that sells products at wholesale prices.

Melanie Greaver Cordova is communications coordinator for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Volunteers needed to help new students as they arrive Aug. 18

Volunteers are needed for Cornell opening day, Aug. 18, when almost 4,000 new undergraduate students and their families will arrive on campus. Volunteers are needed to help direct new students and their families in and around Barton Hall for New Student Check-In, where students will pick up their Cornell ID card and learn about services and opportunities available at the university.

Faculty and staff assistance also is needed to help distribute ID cards and share directions and campus information with visitors.

All volunteers will receive a volunteer T-shirt and lunch.

Supervisory approval is needed for volunteer hours that coincide with scheduled work hours as they will be considered paid release time; if volunteer hours fall outside of scheduled work hours, they will be without pay.

[Sign up to volunteer](#) by Aug. 5 or contact Marisa LaFalce at mfp1@cornell.edu or 607-255-2373.

Missy Bidwell fights hunger, one garden at a time

On a spring day in 2016, Owego third-grader Emily Bidwell came home from school with a mission: to get her plant-savvy family to dedicate their vegetable garden to mitigating childhood hunger in Tioga County. Emily looked to her mom, Missy Bidwell, to get the project off the ground. Missy, a 17-year Cornell staff member, manages the production greenhouse for [Cornell Botanic Gardens](#).

Emily was moved by the sobering statistics on childhood hunger in Tioga County – one in five children lack access to adequate food. Children that are food insecure are more likely to be sick, be sick longer, be hospitalized, have growth issues – both cognitive and physical – and have behavioral issues, according to [Tioga Opportunities, Inc.](#), and the Tioga County Anti-Hunger Task Force.

Emily read about [Katie's Krops](#), a South Carolina-based non-profit founded by a nine-year-old girl. Its mission is to start and maintain vegetable gardens in every state, with harvests to be donated to help feed people in need. Katie's Krops offered grants to help kids garden for hunger relief. Missy and Emily applied, were awarded a grant, and got growing.

“We donated all 10 of our raised garden beds at home to Katie's Krops in 2016,” Missy Bidwell says. “We ended up donating more than 350 pounds of produce to the Lounsberry Food Pantry and Tioga County Anti-Hunger Task Force.”

This year, the Bidwell family, which includes dad Scott and brother Jaxon, wanted to reclaim most of its home garden for family use. So it sought another site for a Katie's Krops garden. In collaboration with the [Tioga Central School District](#), [Catholic Charities](#) and the Rotary Club, Emily and family now work five raised-bed gardens at the former Nichols Elementary school. Beets, kale, beans, lettuce, spinach, zucchini and yellow squash, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli and garlic flourish there, with Catholic Charities distributing the produce for hunger relief.

“It's a lot of work,” Bidwell says. “We have to pick the garden, weigh the produce, log hours worked, capture pictures and upload them monthly to the grower's website for Katie's Krops.”

Alongside the gardening, the Bidwell family raises awareness of hunger mitigation and Katie's Krops by participating in parades, such as the Strawberry Festival Parade in Owego and the Nichols Old Home Day Parade. Emily was sponsored by Tioga County Anti-Hunger task force to bring a mini farmer's market to the Racker Center, and she presented on Katie's Krops to the Tioga County Boys and Girls Clubs. The family has also helped lead the development of a five-acre garden at Tioga Central School; currently planted are potatoes, corn and pumpkins. If the garden thrives as expected, it should yield 5,000 pounds of potatoes, all of which will go to Tioga Central's school lunch program, with the excess being distributed into the community, Bidwell says.

What keeps this family growing food for others?

“It's about being giving members of the community,” Missy Bidwell says. “There's a hunger crisis all the time in the community, and people who live in it can make a positive impact.”

Shannon Dortch is associate director of communications and marketing for Cornell Botanic Gardens.

Backpack Program is collecting school supplies

Now in its 11th year, the [Cornell Elves Backpack Program](#) is accepting new backpacks and supplies for the local area's neediest children through Aug. 24.

By providing children in need with new backpacks and supplies, the program helps them enjoy their first day of school. Contributors can choose to donate to a particular school from the list of those participating or bring backpacks filled with school supplies to the East Hill Office Building, Suite 102.

Backpacks are given to children entering kindergarten through sixth grade who have been identified by nurses or social workers at their schools. Sponsors include Cornell employees, students, local families, neighbors, businesses and such organizations as the Girl Scouts.

Program supporters can take advantage of upcoming summer and back-to-school sales, purchasing a new backpack and all of the [supplies needed](#) for about \$20 to \$25, said Maureen Brull, who coordinates the program. Or they can write a check to "The Elves" and send it to Brull at Benefits Administration, 395 Pine Tree Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. "The Cornell 'elves' know how to stretch a dollar and get what kids need most," she said.

Businesses also can get involved by donating surplus new pencils, notebooks, glue sticks or other new school supplies.

The Cornell Elves Backpack Program began in 2007, when it donated 284 backpacks for children to start the school year. Support has grown steadily: Last year 1,210 new, filled backpacks were donated to 28 schools. This year, 30 schools are participating.

Because the backpack program is not a registered nonprofit organization – and because of the significant expense and ongoing paperwork involved in becoming a nonprofit – donations to the backpack program are not tax deductible.

"We are proud of the fact that we are simply concerned Cornell employees trying to support our communities," said Brull. "We have absolutely no overhead costs, and every penny donated goes directly to help children who are truly in need."

For more information, contact Brull by phone: 607-255-7509 or email: mpb8@cornell.edu.

Modified academic calendar to include longer summer break

Cornell faculty, staff and students prefer modifying the current academic calendar to lengthen the summer break and reduce the number of days in January before classes begin, but not moving Commencement to an earlier date.

This finding and others related to revising Cornell's academic calendar are included in the Academic Calendar Committee's [final report](#), issued May 19. The committee's recommendations have resulted in a Modified Current Calendar that has been approved by Provost Michael Kotlikoff and will go into effect for academic year 2018-19.

The Modified Current Calendar:

- keeps Commencement on Memorial Day weekend but ends exams earlier than does the current calendar;
- extends the August new student orientation period from three to five days;
- starts fall semester instruction two days later than the current calendar;
- identifies the second Monday in October as Indigenous People's Day, in accordance with Student Assembly Resolution 46 and Senate Resolution 126;
- adds two class days after the Thanksgiving break;
- decreases the winter break by three days – ending the fall semester two days later and starting the spring semester one

- day earlier; and
- adjusts the dates for the two spring semester breaks.

The [Academic Calendar Committee](#), co-chaired by Charles Van Loan, dean of the university faculty, and Rebecca Stoltzfus, vice provost for undergraduate education, first met in October 2016 to begin the periodic review of the academic calendar required by the 2013 faculty Senate Resolution 96. They were given two charges: to determine whether breaks (including the summer break) and study days were optimally positioned to bring out the best in students and whether it made sense to end the spring semester earlier to create more summertime employment and academic opportunities for students.

“The Academic Calendar Committee approached its charge carefully and inclusively, soliciting input from all Ithaca campus faculty, students and staff,” said Kotlikoff. According to the report, more than 1,000 comments were posted that related to specific calendar issues and more than 3,000 members of the Cornell community responded to a web survey. The committee also examined public school calendars and discussed possible impacts of calendar changes on child care concerns and religious practices.

The committee made “academically driven, data-based recommendations,” Kotlikoff said. They developed two potential calendars: a Modified Current Calendar alternative that maintains Commencement on Memorial Day weekend and an Early Commencement Calendar alternative that stages graduation two weekends earlier.

The committee then presented these two alternatives and the current calendar to the assemblies, the faculty Senate and the Senate’s Educational Policy Committee. All groups preferred the Modified Current Calendar to the Early Commencement and current calendars.

“The Modified Current Calendar and the Early Commencement Calendar both give many students more time in the summer to work, but the Modified Current Calendar is a positive compromise for those who care about both summer jobs opportunities for students and winter break research and travel opportunities for faculty and others,” said Van Loan. “It also maintains the current two spring break periods, while adjusting their dates to better accommodate the flow of academic work.”

The number of Senior Days – the days between the last exam day and the Friday of commencement weekend – will increase to five days, lessening current conflicts between senior events and study and exam days, he added.

The provost has announced that a separate task force to be led by the next vice provost for undergraduate education will be created to determine if it is feasible to further increase the length of the summer break so that it could accommodate a full semester of classes.

“A summer semester would afford students time for remediation, flexibility to study abroad and/or participate in meaningful internships/externships, or change majors without lengthening the time to degree completion,” Kotlikoff said. “It would also allow colleges to create comprehensive programs that enhance current academic offerings and could be a useful adjunct to faculty in balancing their teaching obligations with research responsibilities.”

Explore college options at Cornell's Summertime College Fair

Cornell University's Summer College for High School Students invites area high school students, their families, teachers and guidance counselors to the Summertime College Fair. This free event will be held July 24, 4-6 p.m., in the Statler Ballroom in Statler Hall.

Admissions officers from more than 40 colleges and universities – from small liberal arts colleges on the East and West coasts to state universities – will answer questions about such topics as their college programs (academic and extracurricular), application process and financial aid.

For more information about the fair and a full list of participating colleges and universities (subject to change), visit sce.cornell.edu/sc/college_fair.

For more information about the summer college, visit summercollege.cornell.edu or contact Janna Dawn, associate director, Cornell University Summer College, B20 Day Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca; phone, 607-255-6203; or email summer_college@cornell.edu.

Staff Development Day, July 12, draws 500

More than 500 staff attended the annual Staff Development Day, July 12, in the Clark atrium, gathering information from 35 resource vendors from Cornell and the region. Many also participated in one or more of the 36 workshops offered and in the resume critiquing/mock interviews conducted by Career Services and HR consultants.

The most popular workshops were those dealing with financial planning and retirement: "Help Make Sure Your Retirement is Ready When You Are," with 91 attending; "There's No Time Like the Present to Save for the Future," with 48 participants; "Making the Most of Social Security," 65; and "Managing Money and Debt," 44.

Cornell exhibitors included representatives from most offices within Human Resources; the Cornell Library; the Office of the Ombudsman; The Cornell Store; Environmental Health and Safety; Cornell Wellness; Cornell University Police; and the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions. Other educational institutions represented were SUNY-Cortland, Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga Boces, Syracuse University, Empire State College, Tompkins Cortland Community College, Elmira College and Columbia College of Missouri.

"Staff Development Day keeps growing," said Deb Billups, career planning consultant in Organizational and Workforce Development, Human Resources, and event manager. "I especially want to thank my co-chair, Tammy Babcock, for her proactive, service-minded and inclusive approach to the planning efforts; Vice President Mary Opperman and all members of Cornell's HR community for supporting a day dedicated to staff development; our exhibitors and workshop presenters and facilitators; and Cornell Dining and the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions for their continued partnership in this day. And, of course, all of the staff members who came to this event, showing us by their numbers how vibrant staff development is at Cornell."
