Welcome to our website.

I expect that the 2015-2016 academic year will be a crucial one for Cornell University and its faculty. President Elizabeth Garrett and Provost Michael Kotlikoff have just started their terms with enormous energy to set possible new directions for the University to pursue, with an emphasis on academic excellence. We faculty must become more engaged as important decisions are being made this year.

Faculty renewal remains a high priority in all colleges. To replace professors hired in the 1970s, now we must continue to recruit and retain the very best researchers and educators so as to improve as an institution. The University's bold initiative of NYC-Tech is underway; fulfillment of its promise will require attention today from the faculty and administration. The electronic revolution is accelerating with undefined opportunities and challenges for higher education and scholarship (see report of Distance Learning Committee http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/Faculty%20Committee%20Reports/DLCRPT.pdf. Opportunities abound globally for Cornell to broaden its impact combining our traditional strengths of excellent liberal studies and fundamental scientific research leading to practical knowledge and application. Meanwhile financial realities cannot be ignored. Cornell's revenue-centered management (RCM) budget model will allow strategic decisions but will be successful only with careful oversight in which the faculty play a critical role. We must find ways to include a diverse, academically talented cohort of academically talented undergraduates and to enhance fellowships for doctoral candidates. Simultaneously we need to keep modernizing our research infrastructure, laboratories and libraries alike.

Because I believe that Cornell's future success in these endeavors will require mutual respect among faculty, administrators, trustees, staff and students, all parties must strive to continually improve communication and collaboration. The Faculty Senate and its committees should provide many opportunities to contribute.

The links on the left lead to descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of Cornell's academics as given in the Faculty Handbook; academic policies; the Faculty Senate's organizational structure (including committee charges and membership) and copies of its recent legislation; information about events and lecture series; the duties/history of the Office of the Dean of the University Faculty; and other topics. We hope that we have answered your questions on these sites.

This office's main role is to assist faculty in their profession and in their interactions with the rest of the University community (whether one another, administrators, trustees, students or staff). Towards this end, we can help you navigate the procedures of the University and the University Faculty as efficiently as possible. We can guide you to the appropriate resources to address various questions. Contact us at deanoffaculty@cornell.edu. Associate Professor Mike Fontaine (mf268@cornell.edu) of Classics serves as the Associate Dean. Karen
Lucas, the office’s Executive Assistant, can be very helpful as a knowledgeable and sympathetic guide to past practices, the Faculty Handbook and other procedures at Cornell; she can be reached at kl24@cornell.edu, or 607-255-4843. Andrea Smith, Administrative Assistant, ams754@cornell.edu, or 607-255-4963, will warmly welcome you and direct you to solutions to your inquiries. She also assists those serving on faculty committees. Cindy Robinson, Administrative Assistant, car6@cornell.edu or 607-255-6608, supports Professors Emeriti (https://www.emeritus.cornell.edu/). Additionally, I serve as the “official” voice of the University faculty, so please contact me at jab16@cornell.edu, or 607-255-4843, if you wish to talk.

The duties of the Dean of the University Faculty are listed in the Organization and Procedures of the University (OPUF), available in the Faculty Handbook (http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/handbook/handbook_main.html). They include i) representing and advocating the interests of the faculty to the President, the Trustees, and the University community; ii) guiding activities of the Faculty Senate and carrying out its decisions; iii) being available for consultation and advice to members of the Faculty, to students, and to members of the University community and helping to resolve various problems that may arise; and iv) advising the administration on matters of University policy; seeking support from the President and Provost on issues of faculty concern; and interacting with the Board of Trustees and its Executive Committee in discussions of broad educational policy.

I welcome your suggestions on how this website and/or its information can be improved and on how we can best serve you. A redesign of the website is underway. Please contact this office if you believe we can assist you in your educational and research missions, or in your interactions with the administration and the Board of Trustees.

Best wishes for a most productive year,

Joseph A. Burns
I.P. Church Professor of Engineering and Professor of Astronomy
Dean of the University Faculty