

# Campus Climate for Teaching and Learning

A Faculty Issue



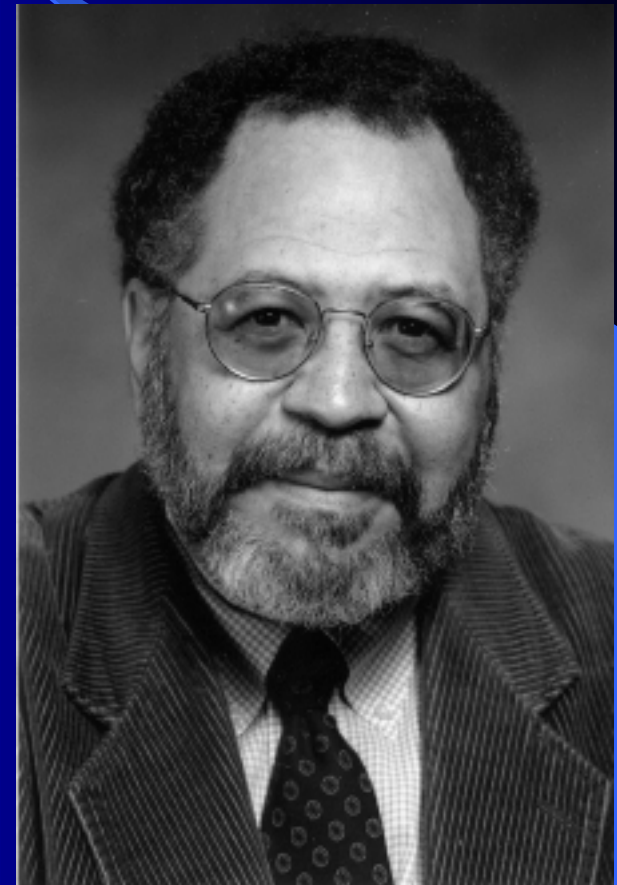
Developed by the  
Faculty Subcommittee  
of the  
Campus Climate Committee

Faculty and Administration statements may be  
read in full on the University Faculty Website  
<<http://UniversityFaculty.cornell.edu>>

# Vice-Provost Robert Harris

“A survey released in February, 2000 by the Business Higher Education Forum revealed that a large majority of the American public support diversity in the work force and in higher education. Ninety percent of respondents agreed ‘that having students of different races, cultures and backgrounds is important to the quality of higher education.’

As **faculty**, we need to consider ways in which we promote diversity not only in enrollment but also in teaching and learning. Academic achievement according to recent research depends in large measure on student trust in a fair, open, and supportive school environment.”



# Reported Harassment Incidents - Fall 1998

## **Verbal Harassment (8)**

shouted confrontations and epithets

## **Written Harassment (4)**

threatening e-mail

derogatory drawings

indecent posters

## **Physical Intimidation (5)**

followed by a vehicle with occupants shouting epithets

unfamiliar men approaching & surrounding women, impeding their  
freedom of movement

From C. U. Police.

# Reported Harassment Incidents - Fall 1998

## **Property Damage (4)**

- removal of personal property
- personal areas covered by graffiti

## **Threatening Environment (4)**

- invasion of private quarters
- display of racist posters
- shining lights into rooms
- outdoor shouting of epithets

## **Refused Services (2)**

- bus & taxi transportation
- accommodation at residence hall service center

These incidents prompted action by the Faculty Senate and the President's statement.  
Incidents of these types continued to be reported throughout Fall 1999 and Spring 2000.

# Faculty Senate Resolution

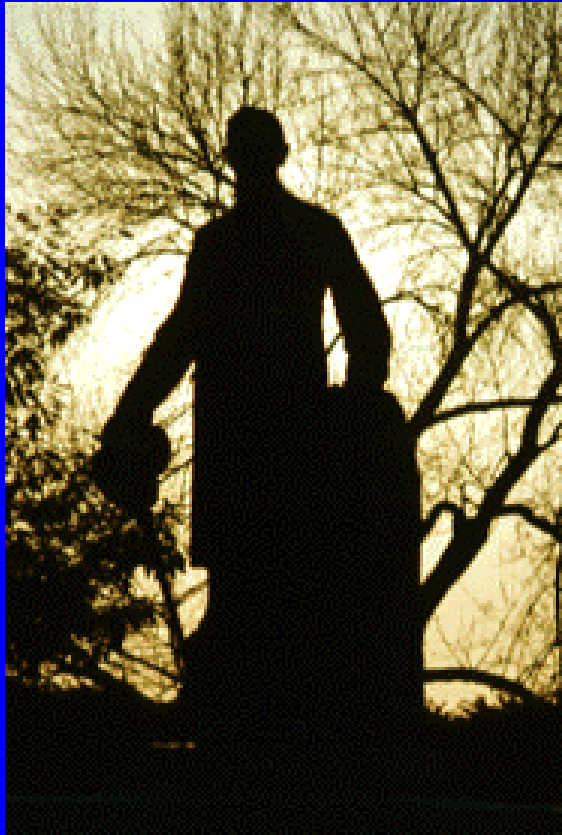
WHEREAS, Cornell University is committed to providing an environment that permits equal opportunity for all members of the community to fulfill their potential for intellectual and social growth and that also permits the free and open exchange of opinions and ideas, and

WHEREAS, the use of harassing speech or actions directed against particular groups of individuals on the basis of their race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or religion is not a legitimate part of that exchange, and damages the trust and mutual respect essential to the well-being of our community,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Cornell Faculty Senate urges the Cornell faculty to play a more active role in ensuring a safe and open campus environment.**

Adopted 10 February 1999

# Cornell University's Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness



Developed by the Campus Climate Committee (R. Harris and R. Johnson, chairs), and endorsed by the Employee, University, Student, and Graduate and Professional Student Assemblies, and the Board of Trustees.

## OPEN DOORS

“I would found an Institution where any person can find instruction in any study.” This statement, made by Ezra Cornell in 1865, proclaims Cornell University’s enduring commitment to inclusion and opportunity, which is rooted in the shared democratic values envisioned by its founders. We honor this legacy of diversity and inclusion and welcome all individuals, including those from groups that have been historically marginalized and previously excluded from equal access to opportunity.



# Cornell University's Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness

## OPEN HEARTS

Cornell's mission is to foster personal discovery and growth, nurture scholarship and creativity across a broad range of common knowledge, and affirm the value to individuals and society of the cultivation of the human mind and spirit. Our legacy is reflected in the diverse composition of our community, the breadth of our curriculum, the strength of our public service, and the depth of our commitment to freedom, equity, and reason. Each member of the Cornell community has a responsibility to honor this legacy and to support a more diverse and inclusive campus in which to work, study, teach, research, and serve.



# Cornell University's Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness

## OPEN MINDS

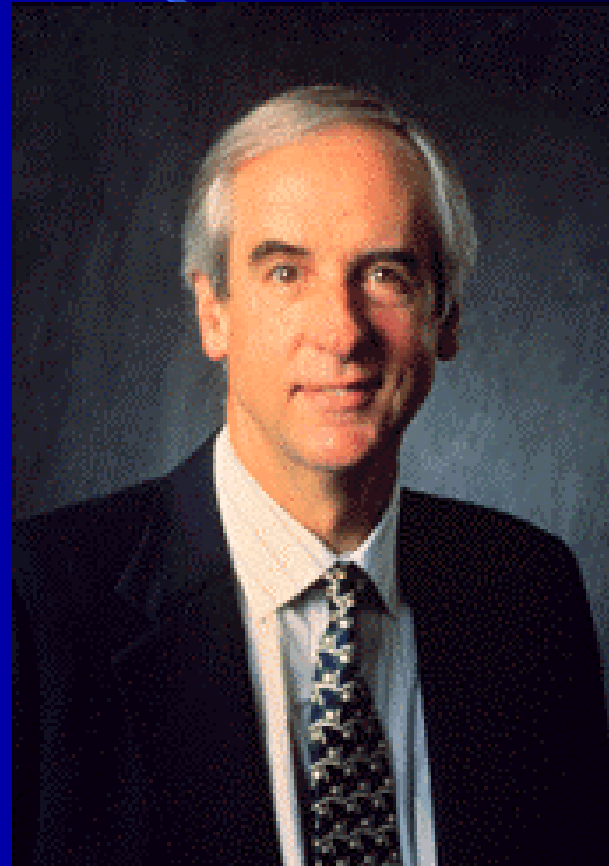
Free expression is essential to this mission, and provocative ideas lawfully presented are an expected result. An enlightened academic community, however, connects freedom with responsibility. Cornell stands for civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement without degrading, abusing, harassing, or silencing others. Cornell is committed to act responsibly and forthrightly to maintain an environment that opens doors, opens hearts, and opens minds.



# President Hunter Rawlings

“In a vibrant academic community ... we confront ... a number of challenging intellectual, cultural and social issues.”

“Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to express themselves ... we have a yeasty mixture of debate and dissent that contributes to Cornell’s character ...”



Source: C. U. News Service Press Release, 27 January 1999.

# President Hunter Rawlings

“Racially based harassment is ignorant and vile and serves to divide community rather than unify it.”

“It is incumbent upon all of us to promote a climate of civility, decency and respect for others on campus.”

“There is no place for racist attitudes in a university that espouses an enlightened use of reason to pursue humanistic understanding and scientific truth.”

# Dean of Students John Ford



“We must not let differences in gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, class, or race divide our community.”

“Building learning relationships, respect and friendships across all of these differences merits our attention.”

“Unfortunately, Cornell is gaining a **national reputation** as an uninviting place.”

Comments to Faculty Senate, 10 February 1999



# Rev. Robert L. Johnson

Director, Cornell United Religious Work



“From these halls, sectarianism must be forever excluded ... all persons of any creed or all creeds must find free and easy access, and a hearty and equal welcome, to the educational facilities possessed by Cornell University” – quoting Ezra Cornell

“... [T]here is an immense quantitative gulf between diversity and genuine pluralism. Diversity is a given condition of modern culture; pluralism is a condition that requires collective and individual will to be realized.”

Source: R. L. Johnson, “Diversity Learnings in Religious Life.”

# Dr. Susan H. Murphy

Vice President, Student and Academic Services

“ [T]he lack of women in the classroom, as professors or guest speakers or teaching assistants, left [Cornell women undergraduates] with few academic role models ... these absences limited their vision of what might be possible in the academy... [and] left them feeling incomplete in their education”



Source: S. H. Murphy, “Thoughts on the Campus Climate from the Perspective of Women Undergraduates”

# Prof. Jane Mt. Pleasant

Crop and Soil Science and Former Director of the American Indian Program



“Many under-represented minority students, faculty and staff have felt under siege at Cornell from a barrage of attacks that seem to question our right to be on campus, to congregate, to be visible, to direct our academic units and to determine our intellectual directions.”

“We can be provoked and publicly demeaned and when we respond with passionate, directed anger, we will be dismissed and ignored. We are so invisible and inconsequential at Cornell that our most public and intense displays of opposition will not be heard or responded to.”

Source: J. Mt. Pleasant, “Campus Climate: The View from Akwe:kon”



# Prof. Ronald Booker

Neurobiology and Behavior

“In order to create a more welcoming environment a starting point is to begin to understand the experience of minorities at Cornell.”

“Underrepresented minorities admitted are more likely to be ‘at risk’, not because they are not smart enough, but rather because their high schools have failed to provide them with the skills they require to handle many of our fast paced and competitive introductory science courses.”

# Prof. Maria Cristina García

History and Latino Studies Program

# Prof. Mary Pat Brady

English

“[Latino/a undergraduates] are often told by ‘Anglo’ students—and sometimes *even their professors*—that they are here only because of affirmative action and are taking the place of ‘more qualified’ students.”

“[Latino/a graduate students] often find themselves patronized as ‘immigrant success stories’ rather than understood as scholars.”

*Emphasis added*

Source: M. C. Garcia and M. P. Brady, “Latino Studies Program.”

Prof. Ellis Hanson

English

Prof. Amy Villarejo

Women's Studies and English

Prof. Anna Marie Smith

Government

“[W]e hear an abundance of complaints from our students about unfair discrimination, harassment, and hate speech from their peers, ... vocally anti-gay Cornell organizations, and *even from faculty.*”

*Emphasis added*

Source: E. Hanson, A. Villarejo, and A. M. Smith “Diversity Statement from the Program in Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Studies

# Prof. Viranjini Munasinghe

Anthropology and Acting Director, Asian American Studies Program

# Prof. Sunn Shelley Wong

English and Director, Asian American Studies Program

“[W]e have often heard students recount instances of their subjection to racial denigration both inside and outside the classroom, in the form of hostile comments or offensive jokes from both *faculty* and students ...”

“The *faculty* in each department can make a significant contribution ... by recognizing and engaging with Ethnic Studies Programs.”

Source: V. Munasinghe and S. S. Wong, “Notes on Campus Climate from The Asian American Studies Program, Cornell University.

# Student Comments

“This University has a problem with racism among students, *faculty*, and administration.” (ALS)

“There is so much hostility on this campus that it is ridiculous . . . . People will carry these attitudes with them when they leave.” (AAP)

“... [M]any students hold prejudices against many people, without even taking into account their culture.” (A&S)



*Emphasis added*

Taken from the 1999 COFHE Cycles Survey's open-ended responses on diversity and campus climate.



# Student Comments



“I would like to have a campus climate where people do not feel pressured to conform and other students can actually seem interesting, rather than homogeneous.”(ENGR)

“Racial awareness is something that most students in Cornell have only first come in contact with since coming to school. Most harbor racial stereotypes from where ever they come.” (ILR)

# Prof. Ronald Booker

The *faculty's* response can not be limited to a few resolutions from the Faculty Senate or the efforts of a few, dedicated faculty. The only way we can send a message to the Cornell Community that we are committed in creating a welcoming environment is through sustained effort in which the *majority of faculty* participate.

“First and foremost, we must recognize that our role as faculty within this community has to extend beyond the classroom and the laboratory. We need to encourage a greater number of faculty to interact with students outside the classroom, ... we cannot simply assume that all of our students will understand the benefits they derive from from living and learning in a diverse community.”

# Prof. Jane Mt. Pleasant

“*Faculty* must take a leadership role in changing the very negative atmosphere that surrounds Cornell. The hostile climate ... is not the result of actions by ‘others.’”

“Over-turning racist and sexist attitudes and actions requires thoughtful, deliberate work from the *faculty in all colleges*.”

*Emphases added*



# Vice Provost Robert Harris

“Our challenge is to build trust in our students across differences. We should determine how our classrooms, laboratories, and departments might foster a more productive environment for our students. And in the process to better prepare them for the diverse world in which they will live and work.”

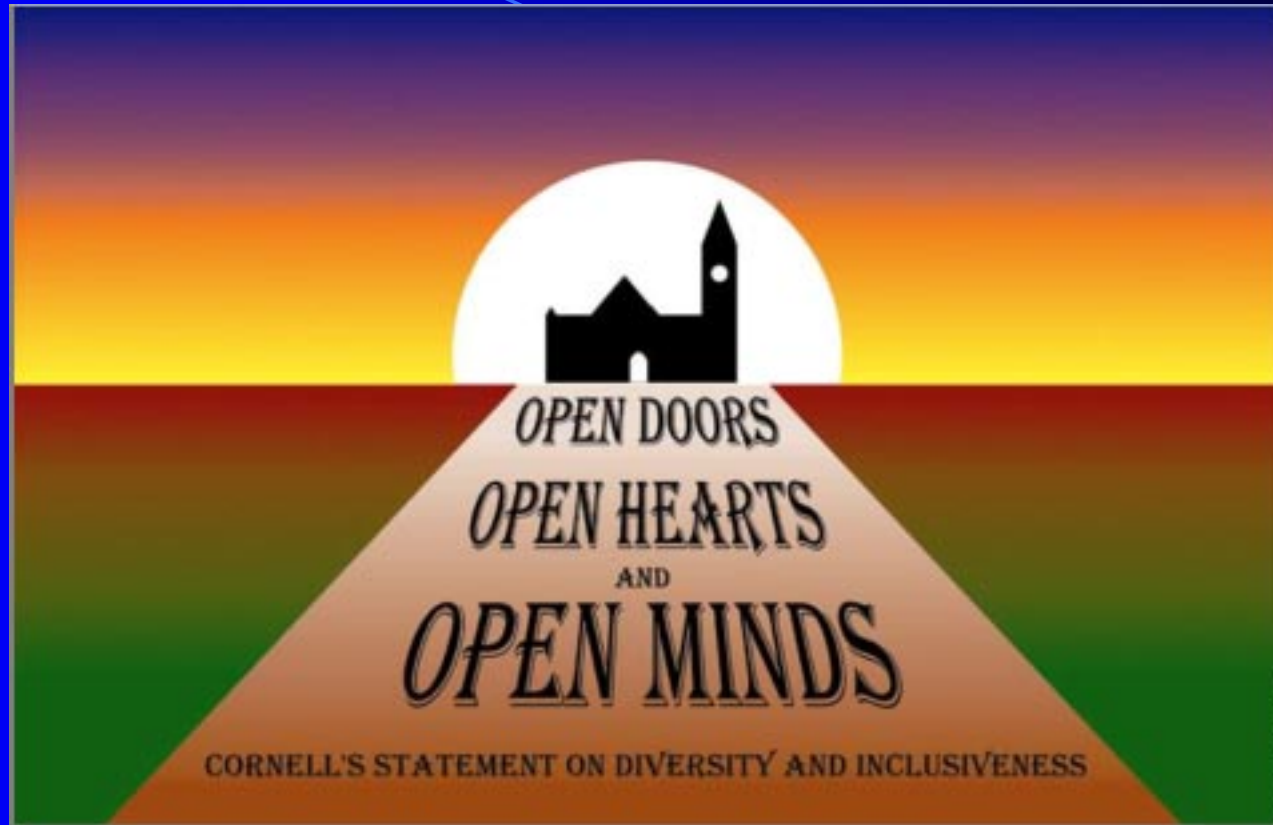
# Dean of Students John Ford

*“Faculty leadership and participation in any or all of these kinds of efforts will follow in Ezra Cornell’s footsteps ...”*

*Emphases added*

## Dean Ford’s Suggestions:

1. In class projects and discussion groups, require that students work with people different than themselves,
2. Support existing programs, including ethnic study and theme programs,
3. participate in new initiatives that address campus by engaging students, *faculty*, and staff in every unit.



Poster Design by Andres Arroyo

*“[M]ore faculty leadership* is needed to help make this a more cohesive campus community. Why? Because we need to make sure this is a good place for *all* of our students.”

— Dean John Ford, 1999