

Kendall S. Carpenter Memorial Advising Awards

Proposal from an *ad hoc* faculty committee
appointed by Dean of the Faculty J. Robert Cooke
October 2, 2001

Steve Ashley, A&LS '62, Johnson School '64, and a member of the Board of Trustees, established the Kendall S. Carpenter Memorial Advising Awards to honor his extraordinary advisor, a professor of business management at Cornell from 1954 until his untimely death at the age of 50 in 1967. Dean of the Faculty J. Robert Cooke appointed an *ad hoc* committee of faculty members to recommend criteria and procedures for making the awards.

Introduction

First, the committee thanks Trustee Ashley for establishing these awards, which reinforce Cornell University's tradition that advising undergraduates is a shared responsibility of faculty members. Faculty advising, when accomplished with care, contributes significantly to individual students' undergraduate experience. An advisor communicates passion for intellectual life and values, helps design adventurous individual courses of study, encourages use of Cornell's many resources, helps solve problems when necessary, and provides personal connection to Cornell. At its best, advising is an extension of classroom teaching in fostering intellectual and personal development and consideration of the relationship between undergraduate education and life outside the academy.

The committee assumes an annual disbursement of \$30,000 for a five-year experimental period and recommends two kinds of awards: individual and programmatic.

Individual Awards

Four \$5,000 awards will be made each year. Professorial faculty and senior lecturers are eligible. Nominees must be active contributors to college teaching and to their field, as appropriate to their appointments, and not have won the award previously. The awards will be paid into a departmental account, which each winner may use to support her/his own research, travel, books, or other professional activities.

Criteria for selection

Because superb advising, like teaching, emerges from individual faculty members' values and interests, the criteria for selecting the awardees should be as broad as possible. These include considering the distinction of:

- Advising individual advisees, students in one's classes, and other undergraduates who happen to find their way into the faculty member's office about courses of study, academic options, and professional life
- Informal advising and out-of-classroom interaction about issues – personal or other – about which students are troubled or care deeply
- Supervision of independent studies, undergraduate research, and undergraduate honors projects
- Leadership in broad curricular reviews or designing and implementing undergraduate programs
- Leadership in structured institutional advising efforts
- Contributions to career development programs
- Serving as faculty advisors to student clubs, athletic teams, community work, or other extra-curricular activities
- Contributions to intellectual liveliness and support of student development in Cornell's residential halls and elsewhere outside the classroom

Soliciting nominations is a responsibility of the provost or designee (or the dean of the faculty, if the provost prefers). In this document, this person will henceforth be referred to as the executor.

One of the difficulties in identifying outstanding advisors is their often unsung influence among a small and dispersed number of undergraduates. Consequently, the executor should solicit nominations through as many routes as possible and from all of the following:

- Student groups that are also called upon to nominate candidates for the Weiss Presidential Fellows (Cornell Ambassadors and holders of Cornell Commitment scholarships) and in addition college peer advising groups
- University staff, especially directors of residence halls, coaches, and the dean of students
- College deans and associate deans, including advising staff (who know which faculty advisors are particularly diligent)
- Alumni/ae – how to solicit nominations from alumni will have to be considered with staff from alumni affairs, but often good advising becomes apparent only upon reflection.
- Department chairs, who should ask their faculty and staff colleagues for suggestions (often faculty colleagues know who is most effective in advising undergraduates and supervising independent projects and departmental staff know who helps students informally and beyond the call of duty)

Letters of Nomination

The nominating letter, submitted to the executor, should describe the candidate's virtues relevant to the above criteria and include names of at least four others – students, faculty, or staff -- willing to write on behalf of the candidate.

Compiling the Dossier

The executor will forward persuasive nominating letters to the nominee's department chair and ask the chair, if s/he thinks the nomination a strong one, to compile the dossier and return it to her/him. The dossier should include:

- Description of candidate's advising activities, including numbers of students affected, as described by the criteria listed above
- Any available evaluations of the candidate's advising
- Letters from formal advisees and other students the candidate has advised (the relevant college or university office will be asked to supply the names and addresses of students involved so the department chair can solicit letters from them)
- Summary of the candidate's scholarly engagement and productivity

Selecting the finalists is also the responsibility of the executor.

The executor will constitute a committee of 6 faculty members and 3 juniors to review the dossiers and compile a short list of finalists. In the committee's first iteration, the faculty members should be nominated by college deans; in subsequent iterations, the faculty members should include the previous year's winners plus additional members nominated by college deans. The students should be recruited from the student groups solicited for nominations (by recommendation of the directors of those programs) and from college peer advising groups (by recommendation of college associate deans). In forming the committee, the executor should be attentive to college representation.

The president **selects the winners** from the short list presented to him.

Program Awards – \$10,000 a year

Although the value of faculty advising is universally acknowledged, the success of faculty advising is variable. Indeed, Cornell undergraduates find advising more problematic than any other aspect of their undergraduate education. Knowing that this is true at most other colleges and universities is cold comfort. Consequently, in addition to honoring exceptional individual advisors, departments, colleges, and other relevant university units (for example, athletics, residence life, and the dean of students) need incentives for systematic improvements.

The executor will solicit proposals from relevant units for systematic projects and decide how best to review and decide upon them. Departments, for example, might propose improvements in advising pre-majors or majors or in developing stronger departmental communities. Colleges might propose experimental projects. Funding for both departmental and college projects must, however, be seed money. If they work, the relevant unit must assume responsibility for them after an initial trial period, as set forth in the original proposal.

Colleges may also propose a small pool of funds for dispersal to individual faculty members who make requests. For example, individual faculty members may ask their college for support for special activities with their advisees (attending a play, eating pizza together before or after a lecture or concert, taking a local field-trip, etc.).

Maximum Publicity

In order to impress and inspire the Cornell community about advising, both the individual and program awards should receive maximum publicity. Nominations and proposals should be solicited in fall or early in the spring semester so dossiers can be compiled during the spring and awards announced in one of the academic year's last issues of the *Cornell Daily Sun*. The winners should be feted along with the Weiss Presidential Fellows at the October meeting of the Board of Trustees. The selection committee can decide how to publicize the awards and honor awardees further.

Continuing Inspiration

In the year after receiving the award, each year's individual winners should share their experiences, either collectively or individually, with other faculty members in order to improve faculty advising generally.

The executor will inform the college deans and associate deans about the programmatic awards and recommend particularly successful models.

Members of the *ad hoc* committee

Lynne S. Abel, chair, Adjunct Associate Professor, Classics

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, College of Arts and Sciences

George Conneman, Professor Emeritus, Applied Economics and Management

Brian Earle, Senior Lecturer, Communication Arts

Richard Galik, Professor, Physics

Teresa Jordan, Professor, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

Associate Dean, College of Engineering

Isaac Kramnick, Richard J. Schwartz Professor, Government

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Henry Richardson, Professor, Architecture

William Tomek, Professor Emeritus, Applied Economics and Management

Elaine Wethington, Associate Professor, Human Development and Family Studies

Co-director, Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center