

1. REPORT ON CORNELL IN CHINA FROM LAURA SPITZ, VICE PROVOST FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Vice Provost Spitz: "So thank you for having me today. Professor Fontaine asked me to update you on where we're at, and then I would like others, appreciate any questions or feedback. I just want to emphasize that I'm updating you on what we're calling the Cornell China Center Initiative, but it would be a small C center, not a capital C center, because the precise scope and scale is yet to be determined and will be determined in consultation with the new faculty committee that's been convened, the Steering Committee. And I'll come back to that in just a minute.

"I wanted to contextualize the update with a little bit of background for people who are not aware of how we find ourselves in this position right now. In 2012, then President Skorton produced a white paper, and in that white paper recommended that Cornell consider something less than campuses in multiple cities abroad.

"And following that, there was a series of task force and committee reports and so on, making recommendations that we move forward with such an initiative. And then those recommendations were accepted by our new president initially, when she first got here in September. And since then, we've been moving forward on that initiative. So that's how we find ourselves at this place.

"One more other sort of background piece is that this is donor-supported, but not donor-led. So we actually went to donors and asked them to support the initiative for the first three years so that we could see if this is where we want to be, how we want to be in the world, how we want to do global. And so we have the funding for the first three years, and we're really grateful for that.

"Of course, continued funding and success depends in part on how we define our purpose, and I think I've been hard to pin down on that. And the reason is because I think it's a really terrific thing that at this point our purposes are multiple.

"My observation of others in this space who have been less successful is that they jumped in with sort of a single purpose in mind and found themselves spending a lot of money on activities or programs that were not successful and created a gap between what they thought they could do and what they are doing. And the gap is an expensive gap.

"So we are trying really hard to be as broad in our purposes and our understanding of our purposes as possible, and including as many people on the campus as possible in order to be as successful as possible.

“Broadly speaking, our purposes coalesce around the three stakeholders you'd imagine: Faculty or academic purposes, programmatic purpose, college research engagement, those kinds of purposes, students. So we'd like very much to have a landing place for students. We'd like to increase the numbers of learning opportunities that we can give them abroad, the kind of internships we can give them abroad and so on.

“And then, of course, we have administrative purposes that we could imagine using this office for. So I'm happy to talk more about them, if that would be useful to you, but I wanted to move to the update.

“So the academic mission is front and center, and here's where we are sort of nine months from when the decision was made. First we have a Faculty Steering Committee that's been convened. All colleges and schools are represented on that committee. They were recommended by their deans and others. They are charged with the strategic planning for the center.

“They are also -- I want to say there's two parts to that. There's a strategic planning from the center; that is to say university initiatives or something I'd call multi-college or multidisciplinary initiatives, but also they are the liaisons with their college, to help the colleges also develop planning around the center.

“So in addition to strategic planning, they are also doing the space use plan. So we can't really have a center till we know what we want to do in it, and we need to figure out what the spaces are that we require for our activities. As part of the space use plan will be a where question. We're going to land in Shanghai.

“In fact, we are going to have an office this summer, which I'll tell you about in just a second, but that's like a landing office, from which we'll build out, not necessarily the location of the center itself. So as part of the strategic planning that the Steering Committee will engage in will be a question of also location.

“And I think it could also -- the answer could be more than one location, smaller offices, not one big center; but anyway, that's for the committee to come back with. So that's the faculty piece.

“We have a China advisory board that's been convened in China, made up of alumni and friends of Cornell, very successful in their areas of business and expertise. It's currently made up of seven, but we are adding now to as many as 15. It met in Beijing

in April, and it will hopefully meet again this fall in New York with the interim president.

“And the purpose of that advisory board is advice and guidance and expertise in assistance and so on in what is really a complicated regulatory and political environment in China on the ground.

“The third people piece that we have is that we've now hired our first executive, inaugural executive director not of the center, but of the center initiative. So still trying to make that distinction. I'm not sure -- we are hiring on a term, because we don't know yet if the same set of skills would be -- that she'll have the same set of skills that would be required to actually ongoing running of a programmatic center kind of activities, but her expertise is in startup management, reputation management.

“She started the Harvard Center for Harvard. She is a Cornell alum. She genuinely loves Cornell, so we're actually very excited to have her because she was working so close with Harvard for so many years, she really understands the educational mission, the educational piece, but she also is really embedded in the political landscape and the regulatory landscape in China, so we're really glad about her.

“Then the fourth piece of the people pieces are on-campus staff partners. So we have staff in my office who are charged with working with the committee, staff who are charged with working with the new director. We have various central offices involved.

“So as you could imagine, government relations, external relations is involved, because we have to figure out how to work with different government agencies in China. AA&D is involved, admissions is involved. We have student partners trying to figure out what students could use this center for and how we could support them. We have Cornell Abroad as a partner and so on.

“I should have also mentioned we have other sort of unit faculty partners. So for example, the Einaudi Center director has been working with us and thinking about if there's an opportunity for the Einaudi Center's activities to sort of happen in China. Director of the East Asia Program is the chair of our Faculty Steering Committee.

“So those are the people pieces in place. I'm probably missing something. The next steps is we'll have an office in Shanghai this summer. It will be a temporary space. We are always mindful in this of having what I would describe as an exit strategy. We hope we're going to be successful. We have really lots of good ideas, we have tremendous faculty involvement now, but of course we don't want to take the

university down a path that we can't get back from, if we needed to. So it will be a temporary space.

"The faculty strategic planning will begin. We're doing legal and preparatory work. Quite a lot of legal work has been done. And regardless of where we are in our process, we are going to sort of mark our decision to be in China with a physical space by having a sustainability conference in the spring of 2017. There's already a committee formed for that conference.

"We imagine that it will be incredibly multi-disciplinary, so there will be the human elements of sustainability and social sciences and environmental sciences and food security, all the things you'd imagine that we do really well here on campus. So that will be in the spring of 2017.

"So I'm happy to take questions. I probably missed saying something that I should have."

"Speaker Lewenstein: "We have about five minutes."

"Professor Miller: "I wanted to ask where Cornell's, I think, very strong presence at Peking University -- Beida, as people call it -- by the China and Asia Pacific Studies Program fits in. I'm not in CAPS, but I'm a big fan from first-hand experience. It's a very rich educational experience for Cornell students to go there, which means they're at the top of this highly ranked university system and, of course, at the political core of China.

"I also see ways in which that strength perhaps could be strengthened even more, and I'm not sure were in the plans. One thing once heard of is to have students from Beida come to Cornell's program. And undergraduates from China had added a lot to my political philosophy courses. I think that would be great enrichment.

"We've sporadically had a presence, Cornell faculty, through a Cornell distinguished scholars lecture series. I found it was a great way of connecting with people in China on issues such as inequality and democracy, and quite rich and free-willing discussions. I'm sure Katz and Stein and Martin did, too, but there's no regular funding.

"So take this as a CAPS fan's enthusiasm. I think Shanghai is wonderful, too, but can we build on the strength we have?"

Vice Provost Spitz: "So thank you for that observation, and then the embedded question about location. I was just visiting the CAPS students when I was in Beijing. It's a tremendous program. So the outgoing CAPS director and incoming CAPS director are both on the Faculty Steering Committee, and I really hope that whatever happens, it's building on that program in Beijing.

"With respect to location, even our director, we hired her, said we're having a center in Shanghai. She said: No, you're not.

"So I feel like there's a building consensus that what we do, we should be doing in Beijing, and that's why we scaled back to just a small office landing in Shanghai.

"So it's an open question. I'm not saying it will be Beijing, but there's definitely a growing sense that that's where we'll end up, especially since we have such strong connections not just to Beida, but to Tsinghua as well. I'm not allowed to do that.

Professor Mingming Wu, Biological and Environmental Engineering Department: "I know there are a lot of little programs that's connected to China that some of -- involved in. I wonder if this program could unite all the little programs, because I think it's very difficult for a small program to have kind of visibility that your program is having, and it might make all these program more useful, if it's centralized at Cornell.

Vice Provost Spitz: "Thank you. So that is one of the -- my explicit hopes is that we would make more visible all of the amazing work we're already doing and find ways to intersect, collaborate, leverage those kinds of things; but in addition, we're really hoping to bring seed money to this initiative so we can give faculty money to figure out what they want to do in this space. But that would also include, I'm hoping, funding for existing programs that need just a little bit more money to be the size that would be optimal."

Speaker Lewenstein: "Time for one more question."

Professor Emeritus Charles Walcott, the Cornell Association of Professors Emeritus: "I'm puzzled as to what it is you're actually doing. We have outposts in Qatar, we have outposts of a variety of sort in New York City. What order of magnitude -- are we planning a university in China? Is that the idea, or could you give us some sense of the scale that you're thinking about and how it might work?"

Vice Provost Spitz: "Sure. Thank you. So no, it is not a campus. I mean, that's clear from all the recommendations from the different faculty groups that nobody -- the

appetite for a campus is very small, even if we thought that was a good idea. The most recent report recommended sort of, as I said, something in between what you would describe as very small and campus outpost kind of situation.

“Where you land in the in between I really feel has to be faculty-driven, so we're asking the Faculty Steering Committee to answer that question for us; but if I was predicting, I think it would be a space that's large enough to enhance already all the really important engagement and work we do with China, and not so big that it creates a new burden on the university.

“It's really meant to make it easier to do what we already do, and make it easier for us to be innovative in that space.

“I don't know if I've really answered it, and I would be happy to continue that conversation.”

Speaker Lewenstein: “Thank you very much. Last two items, we have two items, our Good and Welfare. Dean of the Faculty Elect Charles Van Loan.