

Dean of Faculty Candidates' Statements to Emeritus Faculty, March 2016

Risa Lieberwitz, Professor, ILR

Throughout my 34 years as a Cornell faculty member, I have appreciated the opportunity to work on governance committees and in the Faculty Senate with colleagues at different stages of their careers. As an assistant professor, I learned a great deal from more senior colleagues about Cornell's culture and institutional policies and practices. In my status as a tenured associate professor and then full professor, I have been able to fill that role of a more experienced participant in faculty governance even as I continue to learn from my colleagues. These experiences have deepened my commitment to the importance of encouraging faculty to participate in the shared governance process at all stages of their academic careers.

CAPE has played an important role in faculty governance, as an advocate for emeritus faculty and as a liaison to the Faculty Senate. If elected as Dean of Faculty, one of my priorities will be to expand faculty governance participation by emeritus faculty, including membership on Senate committees and ad hoc committees. As we consider ideas for new programs and policies, we benefit from the disciplinary expertise of our emeritus colleagues. As importantly, our deliberations in faculty governance benefit from emeritus professors' institutional knowledge and experience at Cornell.

Nerissa Russell, Professor, Anthropology, A&S

I view emeritus faculty as a vital part of the Cornell community. Many maintain active research programs and continue to teach and mentor students. Moreover, emeritus professors tend to be those most dedicated to Cornell as an institution, as well as a key repository of institutional memory. I am grateful for the many contributions the emeriti make to the university, and believe that the university should be facilitating these contributions as far as possible. To that end, Cornell is particularly fortunate to have an organization such as CAPE to channel these energies and represent emeriti. It is the responsibility of the dean of faculty to advocate for Cornell's faculty; the emeritus faculty form an important group within this collectivity, with particular sets of interests. I look forward to meeting with representatives of CAPE, and to working together productively.

Paul Soloway, Professor, Division of Nutritional Sciences, CALS

Most faculty I know chose their careers out of love for their discipline, and the university environment that lets them pursue it with others. That is true for me. I don't expect my love of science or Cornell University will retire when I retire. My father, who is also an academic, became an emeritus professor at 72 with two federal grants funded, and continued publishing many years after his emeritus status. He was and still is a great role model for me; and it was an honor to coauthor a paper with him in 2013[1]. Many of us enjoy years of continuing health and vitality after achieving emeritus status, and to those who wish to continue their engagement, please know that Cornell still needs you. The commitment of talented, creative and energetic faculty – including those from the assistant to emeritus professor ranks – is essential for Cornell's success. The decades of professional experiences held by our emeritus faculty have enormous value, and must inform our current choices. In considering my nomination to be a candidate for the Dean of Faculty, I met with, and found Emeritus Professor Charlie Walcott's perspectives very helpful. As Dean of Faculty, I will actively encourage ongoing contributions by our emeritus faculty. CAPE members have enduring roles to play that are vital for our institution's future, and I'm grateful for your willingness to serve.

[1] Soloway, et al., Med Hypotheses 81: 690–694 (2013) PMID: 23942032

Charlie Van Loan, John C. Ford Professor of Engineering

I am a baby boomer and my age group now makes up about 20 percent of the faculty. Although the University has taken major steps towards the rejuvenation of the faculty, a great deal of work remains to be done. The problems are deep and are highlighted in each of the last three Dean of Faculty annual reports to the Trustees.

If I am elected then I will be able to contribute to the dialog in a unique way because I become an emeritus professor myself on July 1. With that promotion I will bring credibility to the table by having firsthand knowledge of the retirement process itself. I look forward to working with my emeritus colleagues through CAPE, figuring out new ways for us to continue on as researchers and teachers. The academic deans and the development office can help, especially if we are creative.

Through me the emeritus faculty will have a clear channel to the higher administration and the Trustees. Our collective wisdom will be a force that helps move Cornell in the right direction through proper governance.

One of my goals is to elevate the status of the emeritus rank so that retirement is viewed by professors in my age group as an irresistible opportunity to further one's scholarship. To make

this happen it is essential that the University Faculty be regarded as a professorial foursome: assistant, associate, full, and emeritus. Lesser views squander talent and jeopardize the whole renewal process. The Dean of Faculty has a major role to play here and it is not just to advocate for the emeritus faculty. He or she must advocate for all those fresh PhDs who we would love to hire but can't. Increasing the pool of tenure-track assistant professorships is a priority and no one can say that better than the emeritus faculty.

Elaine Wethington, Professor, Human Development, CHE

My primary research interests are in the field of gerontology and sociology of the life course. I have served in elected positions for the Behavioral and Social Sciences division of the Gerontological Society of America and I am standing for election this year as the chair of that division.

As a research gerontologist and as a baby boomer of "social security" age I am keenly aware of transition of generations in organizations like Cornell. However, I am also aware that retirement is much less appealing to healthy older faculty who hold positions of influence in their disciplines, have a competitive advantage in winning grant proposals, and foresee another 10-15 years of productive academic life. Although there is clearly a lot of variation in the productivity of faculty as they age, I see as many older faculty at Cornell who are at the peak of their intellectual powers as not. The question for them is: "how do I replace this activity when I retire?"

I know that many see older faculty as contributing to generational conflict for resources at universities. But in my view, this is not consistent with the lessons we can take from observing the impact of aging on society in general. The sky is not falling. Most older adults remain productive, generative and independent late into life. We need to strengthen the potential for older faculty nearing retirement age and for emeritus faculty to continue to contribute in meaningful ways to the university. Older faculty have skills which can be used to help departments and colleges negotiate priorities and solve problems. Rather than assuming that older faculty are the problem, let's welcome them into negotiations for finding solutions, including what we are labeling the retirement crisis.