

## **SOS Resolution On International Collaborations (December 2018)**

The Senate asks that President Martha Pollack outline the conditions under which the University would decline to enter into or would withdraw from an institutional-level academic or research collaboration with another University or institution due to concerns about the violation of human rights or academic freedom, or due to concerns regarding student safety. The Senate asks for an opportunity to comment on a draft of such conditions in the Spring of 2019 and urges the President to make the broad conditions publicly known.

## **President Pollack's Response (January 31, 2019)**

Thank you for sharing the Sense-of-the-Senate resolution regarding Cornell's institution-level collaborations with universities or other institutions abroad.

Cornell has a long history of collaboration across international borders: partnerships that have supported our mission of teaching, discovery, and engagement, and that have resulted in outcomes benefiting the people of many countries, including our own.

Occasionally, we decide to support programs despite concerns about the governments of the countries in which they are located. In making such decisions, our focus must remain on the academic partners and programs themselves, rather than on the actions and policies of their national governments. Just as we would not want collaborations with our own faculty jeopardized should citizens of other countries object to United States government policies, so should we maintain our focus on the policies of our partner institutions and programs, not those of their governments. Most importantly, our partner programs must uphold academic freedom and other Cornell values.

There may be cases where a partnership involves a direct relationship with a government; in such instances, the conduct and policies of that government are relevant and are to be considered. Safety concerns require a similarly individualized approach. We would, for instance, consider rejecting or withdrawing from a foreign study program if it were determined that travel to the region was unreasonably dangerous for our students and personnel. In all such considerations, we should avoid imposing a hard and fast set of rules. Individual situations require individual and careful consideration.

We must also bear strongly in mind that Cornell's mission charges us with the responsibility "to discover, preserve and disseminate knowledge, to educate the next generation of global citizens, and to promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community." International collaboration and cooperation are essential to every aspect of that mission and should be encouraged whenever possible.

Thank you again for providing me the opportunity to elaborate more fully on this important matter. I welcome any further questions the Faculty Senate may have with respect to our collaborations abroad.