



Cornell University

Martha E. Pollack
President

November 17, 2021

Dear Senators,

Thank you for sharing the Faculty Senate comments and vote tally for Resolution 174. As you know, the resolution concerns the process by which the university approves proposals by the schools and colleges to create collaborative programs with other academic institutions and external entities.

The context of this resolution relates to discussions that occurred in the Faculty Senate earlier this year regarding the approval process for International Dual Degree Programs (IDDP) that are proposed, reviewed, and approved by the faculty of colleges or schools. After extensive discussion in the Senate of a proposal from the School of Hotel Administration to establish a dual degree program with Peking University, and expression of interest on the part of senators to be involved in the process of approval, Dean of Faculty Charles Van Loan proposed the development of a collaborative process for considering joint dual degree programs at the March 21, 2021 meeting of the Faculty Senate. The proposal process was then revised in several important ways to assure consideration of ethical issues and enhance senate participation. The process now requires proposals to: 1) include answers to several questions from Cornell's Ethical Principles for International Engagement; 2) be reviewed by the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Programs and Policies (CAPP), with review by the full Faculty Senate if the CAPP feels it is necessary; and 3) to undergo an additional review by the university's International Council (IC), on which the Chair of the CAPP is included as an official member. This revised process was presented to the full Faculty Senate by a member of the University Faculty Committee of the Senate on September 22, 2021 as part of Resolution 160, which requested these changes be made to the IDDP review process. That proposal was withdrawn by unanimous vote of the Faculty Senate, as the proposed process had already been agreed to by the provost, and thus no further senate action was deemed necessary by the proposal sponsors.

Resolution 174, supported by about a third of eligible Faculty Senate voters, proposes an entirely different process that is neither practical nor supported by university bylaws, and markedly expands the scope of programs to be overseen by such a process beyond International Dual Degree Programs. The Resolution asserts the purview of the entire Faculty Senate over "(a) all arrangements in which course credits earned at Cornell are, by agreement, accepted by another institution; (b) all arrangements in which course credits earned at another institution are, by agreement, accepted by Cornell; (c) all arrangements, including "commercial agreements," with private corporations in which a Cornell unit provides formal course instruction (including, but not limited to, arrangements in which a Cornell unit awards a "certificate"); and (d) any other arrangement in which a Cornell unit provides course instruction for another institution or private corporation." As such, it would include not only all collaborative educational programs with domestic and international academic partners, but also all eCornell offerings, instruction offered through Cornell's many extension offices across the state, multiple continuing education and executive education programs, the Cornell Prison Education Program, and many other faculty efforts to extend the university's educational mission beyond campus.

Requiring Faculty Senate approval for this enormous range of programs would undercut the appropriate authority of faculty in the schools and colleges who are directly responsible for them. Additionally, implementation of this

level of review is obviously impractical. The Faculty Senate is a critical advisory body tasked with providing high-level faculty wisdom and advice on fundamental issues facing the university. It is not an operational or regulatory authority with the mandate, structure, staffing, subject matter expertise, or veto power necessary to engage in meaningful individualized assessments of Cornell's extensive outward-facing educational efforts.

The Faculty Senate has, through its relevant designated committees, devised a process in consultation with administration by which the senate advises the provost on approval of IDDP programs that are proposed by faculty within colleges and schools, and this consultative process has in turn led to collective agreement on a multi-level review process aimed at ensuring that these programs comport with the university's ideals and expectations, respect the authority and academic freedom of faculty in the schools and colleges, and ensure timely and consistent program review. We view this as a sound example of productive and collaborative interactions between the university administration and the Faculty Senate. We value this process of collaborative consultation and will continue to follow this model in the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to Resolution 174. We look forward to our continuing work with the Faculty Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha E. Pollack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martha E. Pollack, President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael I. Kotlikoff". The signature is highly stylized and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Michael I. Kotlikoff, Provost