



Cornell University
Office of the Provost

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MEMORANDUM

March 9, 2022

To: Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of Faculty
From: Michael I. Kotlikoff, Provost
Subject: Part-time Bachelor Degree for Non-traditional Students

Thank you for reviewing the proposal for a Part-time Bachelor's Degree for Non-traditional Students. I received similarly helpful comments from the Committee on Academic Programs and Policies and Educational Policies Committee and have separately responded to those committees.

I am pleased that the CAFPSF committee supports the vision and aspiration of an undergraduate degree program for non-traditional students. As your committee noted, the extension of the opportunity to earn a Cornell undergraduate degree to groups of students for whom such a degree would not otherwise be possible, and in so doing to extend the impact of the university, aligns with "the university's founding as a land grant institution intent on educating *any person in any study*" and provides a compelling rationale for this effort.

As with the other committees, however, you have indicated concerns regarding how such a program would be implemented. Issues of faculty alignment, faculty burden, quality of education, academic standards for students, student composition, financial aid, the makeup of enrolled students, and how the program is differentiated from our residential degrees were similarly identified by committee members, but out of the scope of their charge to solve. We agree that these issues must be carefully considered as we move the effort forward and intend to begin addressing these concerns through a careful planning process that will be undertaken with the leadership of the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions. To enable that effort, I will begin a search for the next dean of the school, whose primary responsibility will be the establishment of a part-time bachelor's degree program within the school, consistent with the cautions articulated by your committee and CAPP and EPC. The search process will be guided by the need to identify an academic leader with appropriate expertise and experience to successfully establish this program. Your input will be critical in guiding some of the key questions that must be answered, and I anticipate continued consultation following the recruitment of the new dean.

I should add that I am optimistic that we will be successful in creating a distinctive and high-quality degree program given the foundation of the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions and the expertise and success of eCornell, as well as the commitment of our faculty to this effort, which aligns so well with Cornell's legacy.

Thank you again for your advice and counsel. I look forward to your partnership as we proceed to the next phase.

cc: Eve DeRosa
Neema Kudva