



Cornell University

**Search for the  
Inaugural Dean  
School of Public Policy**

**Cornell University**

**Ithaca, New York**

## **The Search**

Cornell University seeks a bold and visionary leader, one who is both an outstanding scholar and has a committed record of engagement with policy, to serve as the inaugural dean of the new Cornell School of Public Policy.

In these unprecedented times, informed, thoughtful, and effective public policy is essential for solving the world's biggest challenges. In areas from race, inequality, health, and technology to climate change, migration, and national security, we see how important government decisions—and the social, political, and economic processes that shape them—are for impacting people's lives. The Cornell School of Public Policy will bring the expertise of Cornell faculty across the University to bear on these and other policy issues that confront our world. It will do this by training undergraduate, professional, and doctoral students, producing cutting-edge research, and engaging with policy leaders in Albany, New York City, Washington, and around the world.

Following from Cornell's status as both an Ivy League university and the land-grant university for the state of New York, the School of Public Policy's mission will be to enhance the impact and visibility of the University's world-class programs and research. The School of Public Policy will be grounded in the combination of disciplinary excellence and interdisciplinary innovation that is the hallmark of Cornell. Rooted in Ezra Cornell's ideal of founding an institution where "any person can find instruction in any study", the School of Public Policy will also have a core commitment to advancing goals of enhancing equity, combating structural racism, and creating an inclusive learning and working environment.

The Cornell School of Public Policy will launch on July 1, 2021. The inaugural dean will bring a clear vision of how to support the academic excellence of the programs incorporated in the School and how to weave this new School of Public Policy into the rich fabric of Cornell's

landscape, connecting it to the many strong areas of policy work that already exist across the University. Drawing on Cornell's longstanding tradition of faculty governance, the inaugural dean will work together with Cornell's existing policy faculty to grow the School of Public Policy. In addition to launching new educational programs and strengthening Cornell's policy footprint around the world, the dean will also take the lead in shaping the School of Public Policy through new faculty hiring and appointments.

Cornell has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **Background**

### **Cornell University**

Cornell University is a remarkable community of scholars, educators, students, staff, and alumni who are deeply influenced by proud traditions and a set of cherished founding principles. Unique among its Ivy League peers, Cornell, founded in 1865, is a private university with a land-grant mission, a world-class research institution known for the breadth and rigor of its curricula, and an academy dedicated to preparing young people to be well-educated and well-rounded citizens of the world. Its faculty and students believe in the critical importance of knowledge—both theoretical and applied—as a means of improving the human condition and solving the world's problems. It embraces traditional liberal arts education, practical applications of knowledge, and interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to research and teaching. It champions free and open intellectual inquiry and expression, treats all individuals with dignity and respect, celebrates difference and diversity, and remains open and accessible to all who meet its high academic standards.

Today, Cornell consists of 15 schools and colleges. Across the main Ithaca campus, the Weill Cornell Medicine campuses in New York City and Qatar, and Cornell Tech in New York City, the University enrolls nearly 15,000 undergraduates and over 8,000 graduate and professional students. Twenty percent of these students are international in origin, representing over 120 countries. Cornell employs some 8,100 staff and 1,600 professorial faculty members in Ithaca and at Cornell Tech, and an additional 5,000 staff and 1,700 faculty members at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City.

The University's operating budget is approximately \$4.5 billion, and its investment portfolio values close to \$7.2 billion as of October 2020.

The University plans to grow its undergraduate population by approximately 800 students over the next several years, and generous financial aid programs reflect its concomitant commitment to student access. Forty-four percent of enrolled undergraduate students receive grant-based financial aid, with 16 percent of students receiving Pell grants. The average Cornell grant award for a first-year student in the Class of 2024 was \$45,080, and was as high as \$76,997.

Cornell undergraduate, graduate, and professional students are intellectually engaged, and their success in and out of the classroom is reflected in the many prestigious fellowships they receive annually. The University has produced 29 Rhodes Scholars and 31 Marshall Scholars in its history, among other national awards.

## **The School of Public Policy**

The pressing societal issues of our time—climate change, national security, immigration, racism, inequality, global economic development, domestic tax reform, and so many more—are deeply intertwined with decisions made by governments. These societal issues require public policy experts who can address how government choices intersect with people’s lives.

In a recent, yearslong, and comprehensive review of the social sciences at Cornell, the University recognized clear potential for its policy-related faculty to address these very issues. That review further recognized the need for its faculty to collaborate more frequently on research and to bring that work to national and international stakeholders.

Cornell aspires to a greater level of impact and standing in public policy and the social sciences. It seeks to join scholars operating across the University under a unified banner. To that end, the Cornell School of Public Policy will bring together researchers interested in the development, implementation, and review of policy. It will leverage Cornell University’s existing strengths in policy-related teaching and research, fostering purposeful and sustained connection that breaks down barriers to collaboration and that enhances the University’s visibility, reputation, and impact.

Existing areas of policy strength at Cornell upon which to build at the School of Public Policy include data science and technology, environment and sustainability, health, human security, inequality, and development economics and politics. In addition, the University has highlighted race and public policy as a significant future aspiration.

A faculty implementation committee began work last year to lay the groundwork for the forthcoming school, set to launch in the upcoming summer. This committee, working with senior University leaders, has helped to define the basic organizational structure, budget flows, ongoing and potential curricular and degree offerings, initial faculty composition, governance mechanisms, and areas of existing or emerging research strength. This framework will offer the inaugural dean a foundation upon which to develop the School of Public Policy.

An independent academic unit at Cornell, the School will initially be comprised of the faculty of the existing Department of Policy Analysis & Management (PAM), policy-related faculty from the Department of Government, and prominent policy scholars in other departments across campus. In almost all cases, the faculty of the school will be jointly appointed in an underlying disciplinary department.

The School of Public Policy will offer undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs, including the existing Master of Public Administration and Master of Health Administration, as well as a newly envisioned Master of Public Policy and PhD in public policy. New majors and minors in public policy and other policy-related studies will help drive undergraduate enrollment, and executive and non-degree programming will further complement the School's suite of offerings. These programs will train the next generation of public policy experts and practitioners, preparing them for roles in government, business, and nonprofits.

The School of Public Policy will leverage Cornell's reach beyond Ithaca: Cornell in Washington offers academic, professional development, and community engagement opportunities in the heart of the nation's capital; Cornell's Institute of Politics and Global Affairs in New York City is the only academically based institute of politics and global affairs located in the New York metropolitan area; and the University has long maintained a presence in Albany, where students can combine a full spring semester of Cornell credit with a paid internship with the New York State Legislature.

## **The Role**

The inaugural dean will lead the School of Public Policy as its chief executive and academic officer and will report to the university provost. The dean will join Cornell University amid a period of exciting investment in the social sciences.

This new leader will bear overall responsibility for the School, setting the strategy and direction, ensuring the academic quality of degree programs and research, managing finances and personnel, and serving as a thought leader in the academy to advance the School's reputation. As the inaugural leader of a newly formed school, the dean will play a major role in setting the culture and agenda for the public policy community at Cornell. External engagement, cross-campus collaboration, and proactivity in equity and inclusion will be crucial to the new dean and school's success.

The inaugural dean will build a team of direct reports necessary to assist in the daily management and strategic leadership of the School.

## **Opportunities and Challenges for the Dean**

In its inaugural dean of public policy, Cornell University seeks an engaging and forward-thinking academic leader who can chart a pathway to excellence in the policy realm and, by extension, enhance Cornell's strength in the social sciences. Given this overarching charge, the primary opportunities and challenges for the next dean include the following:

### **Articulate a vision and define a strategy that charts a pathway to excellence**

As the inaugural leader of the new School of Public Policy, the dean will have a unique opportunity to make a mark on a defining part of Cornell's history and on the field of policy

analysis. The ongoing program expansion, faculty growth, and infrastructure development under the next dean's tenure will shape the future of the School of Public Policy for years to come. The dean must work with stakeholders to develop a strategic plan that quickly establishes Cornell among the premier public policy institutions in academia and that bolsters the University's long-term strategic emphasis on the social sciences.

### **Assemble and develop preeminent faculty that produce outstanding, high-impact research**

The School of Public Policy should provide the infrastructure necessary for supporting and enhancing faculty research. Generating external research funding will be important for increasing both resources and visibility. The dean will support faculty in their pursuit of individual research grants, larger collaborative grants, training grants, and, of particular importance for a successful policy school, research-practice partnerships. Faculty should engage with the public and evaluate the impact of engagement.

The new school should build upon areas of policy where Cornell has a unique comparative advantage relative to its peers, such as in data science and technology, environment and sustainability, health, human security, inequality, and development economics and politics. The University also seeks to be a national leader in public policy research on race and racism. Relatedly, academic programs should connect to the research mission of Cornell's top social science scholars and build on engagement and extension work.

Both external and internal faculty recruitment, with a strong emphasis on joint appointments, will be crucial to the School's success. The inaugural dean will join a cohort of close-knit and collaborative academic deans invested in and enthusiastic about the new school's launch.

### **Educate the next generation of leading policy experts and practitioners**

Education of students at all levels should be a central component of the School of Public Policy, including expanding existing efforts and creating new degrees. Students who study and go on to future careers in areas related to policy, whether in the public or private sectors, embody the University's land-grant mission. Buy-in from faculty will require careful consideration of ways programs can contribute to, rather than detract from, the missions and revenue streams of other parts of the University.

At the undergraduate level, the School of Public Policy should educate students in multiple areas related to policy. A new public policy major and minor should build upon existing undergraduate majors in policy analysis and management and health care policy. There is an opportunity to develop additional undergraduate majors that could build upon areas of excellence, like health policy, or areas of opportunity, like data science, race, or environmental, science, workforce, or regulatory policy.

As the School advances, the dean will field a suite of professional and executive master's degree programs. In addition to taking over the Master of Public Administration and Master of Health Administration, the dean will oversee the launch of a new Master of Public Policy. Existing University strengths present tremendous opportunities for additional master's programs in areas such as data science for public policy. Executive and non-degree programs and courses can attract non-traditional and mid-career professionals to blended learning opportunities at Cornell's New York City campuses, as well as existing programming in Albany and Washington, DC.

The new school should also offer doctoral programs, the principal one being a PhD in public policy. The dean will find faculty across Cornell supportive of the creation of joint PhD programs. Faculty should be encouraged to come up with models for joint programs that will enhance faculty research and support graduate student success.

### **Enhance Cornell's reputation, visibility, and impact in both the academic community and the public sphere**

Public engagement is mandated by Cornell's identity as a land-grant institution and by the principles of the University's founder. Connection to the community outside the University is also an imperative for increasing visibility and enhancing the impact of Cornell's excellent research and teaching. Policy-related public engagement can take many forms, including direct media engagement to help translate important research to the public, health care partnerships with communities to provide evidence-based care, data-based partnerships to evaluate program effectiveness and popular sentiment, and more. Other examples of policy-related public engagement include participating in Congressional briefings and providing expert testimony, serving on expert panels and advisory boards, and participating in government and foundation initiatives around policy research dissemination. Programs like Cornell in Washington and Cornell in Albany, as well as connections to the New York City campuses, can be used strategically to help enhance public engagement.

### **Foster a community of faculty, staff, and students who exemplify equity, diversity, and inclusivity on and beyond campus**

The School of Public Policy should be a community of staff, scholars, and learners who demonstrate leadership in diversity, equity, and inclusion. The dean will ensure that the School proactively addresses a growing array of community needs, serving as a thoughtful advocate and vocal leader who empowers those from historically underrepresented groups. Efforts will require intentional work not only in recruitment and retention, but in culture and climate. The dean should parlay efforts in this domain into the School's teaching and research, as well.

### **Establish purposeful, sustained connections across the Cornell ecosystem**

The dean should work to reduce barriers to collaboration across the various policy-related activities at the University. Increased connections with other parts of Cornell, like the

Atkinson Center and Cornell's different campuses, will benefit the School. The dean should seek to develop new programs and areas of study in conjunction with other units on campus and seek joint hires where opportunities exist.

### **Marshal philanthropic and alumni support for this exciting new chapter in Cornell's history**

Philanthropic support will be critical to the School of Public Policy's success. The dean will work collaboratively with other units to cultivate and steward relationships with existing policy analysis and management and government alumni, as well as with current faculty, students, and staff. The dean will also work to identify potential friends of the University and cultivate support from corporate and foundation sources. As a new school without a substantial alumni base, the dean will shape and define alumni engagement at the outset.

### **The Successful Candidate**

The qualities sought in the inaugural dean of the School of Public Policy include unwavering integrity, deep appreciation for scholarship, outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, strong administrative abilities, high energy, political astuteness, collegiality, and deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Cornell invites candidates from a range of professional backgrounds, internal and external to the Cornell community, who demonstrate many of these skills, qualities, and experiences:

- A recognized scholarly leader with an earned terminal degree and a distinguished record of research impact;
- A demonstrated track record of enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion and bringing creative strategies to address the challenges of recruiting and retaining students, staff, and scholars from historically underrepresented groups;
- A keen sense for emerging societal trends and developments with potentially wide-ranging policy implications;
- An experienced manager with consistent track record of administrative accomplishments;
- A consultative leadership style; an excellent collaborator who can partner with other administrators, faculty, staff, and students;
- Successful ability to recruit and develop superb researchers and educators;
- A demonstrated passion for students and a commitment to excellence in teaching and student success;
- Established connections in government, industry, and nonprofits and the ability to create opportunities for faculty and students with partners;
- An exceptional communicator who can inspire internal and external constituencies to attract supporters and raise funds;
- Ability and eagerness to serve as a public intellectual on behalf of the School, the University, and the field of public policy;
- Financially astute, with experience establishing budget priorities and responsibly stewarding resources;

- Ability to instill trust and confidence among others; and a record that demonstrates the highest degree of integrity, honesty, and fairness.

## To Apply

Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent in strict confidence to:

Kate Barry, Partner  
David Chy, Associate  
Isaacson, Miller  
<https://www.imsearch.com/7839>  
263 Summer Street, Floor 7  
Boston, MA 02210

***Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans and Individuals with Disabilities. We also recognize a lawful preference in employment practices for Native Americans living on or near Indian reservations. Cornell University is an innovative Ivy League university and a great place to work. Our inclusive community of scholars, students, and staff impart an uncommon sense of larger purpose, and contribute creative ideas to further the university's mission of teaching, discovery, and engagement.***