THE SEARCH

Cornell University seeks an innovative and visionary leader to serve as Dean of the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions (SCE). This is an opportunity to create and manage a strategic vision for the School, while advancing experiential learning, professional development opportunities, and promoting intellectual growth driven by educational and technological innovations. The Dean will join SCE at a time of tremendous opportunity as Cornell aspires to develop and implement SCE’s first ever degree program, which will expand Cornell’s historical founding and aspirational ethos of educating “any person” in “any study” by creating an online undergraduate degree for non-traditional students.

As a federal land-grant institution in New York State and a member of the Ivy League with $1.19 billion in research funding, Cornell upholds its commitment to making contributions in all fields of knowledge through teaching, research, and public service.

The School currently draws upon the resources of all of Cornell’s academic units and eCornell to offer high quality learning opportunities for Cornell students and others in summer and winter sessions, identifying needs and developing programs that most appropriately and effectively deploy Cornell’s vast and varied educational resources.

Reporting to the Provost, the Dean of the SCE is a key member of the academic leadership team, partnering with deans, vice provosts, and vice presidents to advance and support a forward-thinking vision. The successful candidate will have a record of demonstrated leadership experience in continuing education with an emphasis on developing new academic programs and appropriate organizational infrastructure. The new Dean will be a key thought leader in expanding Cornell’s continuing education programs and will provide strategic leadership in expanding access to a portfolio of high-quality academic programs that meet student, workforce, and societal needs, as well as deliver academic programs with alternative access and entry points.

This is an outstanding opportunity for a visionary leader dedicated to the values, ideals, and mission of the institution. The ideal candidate will bring proven academic administrative leadership; the ability to
engage others in developing and implementing an academic vision for the school; a deep understanding of change management; and demonstrated success with diversity and inclusion efforts. Cornell seeks a leader who will be a visible and active partner in the development and launch of innovative programs of outstanding quality.

Cornell has retained Isaacson, Miller, a leading national search firm, to assist with this recruitment. Inquiries, nominations, and applications, in the form of a CV and cover letter, should be sent in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

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. It is also 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 over 15,000 undergraduates and over 8,000 graduate and professional students. Twenty percent of these students are international in origin, representing over 120 countries. In addition, eCornell, an important partner to SCE, provides over 100 online and professional certificate programs to students around the world with online courses developed by Cornell University’s faculty. More information about eCornell can be found here.

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 $5.2 billion, and its investment portfolio was valued close to $10 billion in 2021.

For more information, visit Cornell University’s website here.

LEADERSHIP

Martha E. Pollack, M.S., Ph.D, is the fourteenth president of Cornell University and professor of computer science, information science, and linguistics. She took office in 2017 and has championed the realization of a vision of “One Cornell” through the cultivation of productive and meaningful synergies across disciplines and geographies, capitalizing on the complementary strengths of Cornell’s urban and rural identities. She was previously provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Michigan, where she was also a professor of computer science and information.
Michael I. Kotlikoff, V.M.D., Ph.D., is Provost and both chief academic officer and chief budgeting officer of the University. An internationally recognized researcher in cardiovascular biology, he is professor of molecular physiology and was previously the Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell. His signature initiative, Radical Collaboration, recruits faculty and supports infrastructure in seven key multidisciplinary areas: nanoscale science and microsystems engineering, genome biology, data science, sustainability, digital agriculture, infection biology and the critical inquiry into values, imagination and culture (CIVIC). Kotlikoff has also initiated efforts to invest in academic and student housing facilities, re-evaluate curricula and implement effective academic technologies, and develop policies to facilitate greater faculty diversity and dual career hiring across the colleges.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AND SUMMER SESSIONS

Cornell University’s School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions (SCE) dates back to 1876 and is dedicated to extending Ezra Cornell’s vision of an institution “where any person can find instruction in any study” to include “at any time, in any place.” The School was described by Cornell President Jacob Gould Schurman in his 1892 report to trustees as an “integral part of the university,” and was one of the first official summer programs offered in the United States.

SCE offers for-credit courses to students outside of regular academic semesters (winter and summer sessions), serving approximately 6,000 students each year, including Cornell and non-Cornell undergraduate and graduate students, high school students, international students and scholars, adult learners, professionals, area residents, and retirees. It also offers opportunities for students not matriculated in a Cornell degree program to enroll in for-credit courses during the fall and spring semesters. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, SCE mounted more than 300 classes and programs, enrolled and registered more than 6,400 students, and collected approximately $29 million in tuition, program fees, gifts, and other resources.

SCE Signature Programs

In addition to SCE’s offering of summer session and winter session courses, SCE also provides opportunities for high school students and specialized populations to participate in its programs. Some of these signature programs include the following:

Cornell Prison Education Program

SCE’s longstanding commitment to equitable access to education has been demonstrated by the Cornell Prison Education Program (CPEP). As a signature program within SCE, CPEP’s mission is to provide high quality higher education in New York State prisons; to help CPEP students build meaningful lives inside prison as well as prepare for successful re-entry into civic life; and to inform thought and action on social justice issues among past and present CPEP students, volunteers, and the wider public.

Pre-College Studies

Pre-College Studies allows high school students to earn college credit by taking regular university courses taught by Cornell faculty members. Students can do so in a mix of in-person and online
courses during the summer, fall, winter, or spring or attend the on-campus summer residential program, which is a premier pre-college experience for high school students.

More information about the SCE can be found [here](#).

**THE ROLE OF THE DEAN**

The Dean will provide leadership for SCE’s existing programs, taught by full-time faculty members from various disciplines across Cornell’s schools and colleges and a number of part-time adjunct faculty. The individual will develop programs that meet the educational needs of a diverse array of students within and outside of the United States, including working professionals. These programs will provide curricula that will enable students to gain new skills and ways of thinking for innovative learning and personal growth.

A primary focus of the Dean will be expanding the current mission of SCE by determining the best design for a new online bachelor’s degree program, working closely with Cornell’s Provost, the Vice Provost for External Education, and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. The degree would draw heavily upon existing expertise and resources of Cornell faculty and eCornell to ensure a high-quality educational experience as described in the proposal for the degree: [Part-time Bachelor’s Degree for Non-traditional Students](#). There are many details to be determined in the development of the new degree program. The new Dean will work closely with constituents across the university to build the program and ensure that its quality meets Cornell’s high academic standards.

**KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**Articulate and execute a clear and forward-looking vision of SCE, which strategically broadens and enriches the learning experience for a growing and diversifying group of students**

The Dean will work with SCE’s leadership, faculty, staff, and students to develop a comprehensive, bold, and inclusive vision that furthers Cornell’s reputation as a leader in innovation and academic excellence. The vision should be a clear, compelling framework aligning with the University, further enhancing the enrollment and diversity of exemplary students entering the School. The Dean will assist in expanding curricula, experiences, and support services needed by students in the summer and winter sessions and future part-time students to ensure their success throughout their undergraduate journey and beyond. With an ever-diversifying student population and growing online presence, the incoming Dean will find innovative ways to lead SCE to become a model for continuing education. Furthermore, the Dean will assess current programming, delivery methods, and the marketplace to guide the strategy of the School’s next chapter.

**Deepen collaboration across the University and beyond**

SCE relies heavily on faculty members from the various academic units to support its programming. This individual must be a strong relationship builder with an ability to forge mutually beneficial partnerships with the other college/school deans. It will be essential that the new Dean works with faculty from other schools to support SCE’s programs and initiatives, as well as to leverage SCE to support the evolving needs of other academic units.
The Dean will be a successful advocate for SCE while further integrating the school with the larger Cornell community and promoting the value of an SCE education as a critical component of the Cornell mission. Furthermore, the Dean will develop outcomes to highlight SCE’s impactful mission. The Dean will set the cultural tone of SCE, ensuring that it is seen as a valued and trusted partner across the university in collaborative efforts to foster synergies that increase opportunities for efficiencies, student development, and community success.

**Clearly define, further develop, and enrich the identity and organizational structure of SCE**

Building on its partnership with eCornell and primed for innovation, the incoming Dean has a unique opportunity to build a strong foundation by clearly defining the School’s short- and long-term strategic priorities to campus leadership and the Cornell community. The Dean will promote SCE’s mission to senior level administration, faculty, student leaders and other key stakeholders. To hone the organization of SCE and to better execute novel and ongoing strategic priorities, the Dean will assist in the refinement of the administrative organizational structure of SCE, enhancing communications, shared governance practices and successful outcomes. The development of a new part-time bachelor’s degree program will necessitate building an infrastructure to support this program. The Dean will bring a focus on partnering and building on SCE’s operational effectiveness seizing opportunities to partner with eCornell to develop innovative delivery methods and better leverage its technology and infrastructure to further support and enhance SCE’s programs.

**Manage a complex budget system to incentivize faculty members to support SCE**

Cornell operates under a Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) system that allocates income and expenses to the schools and colleges and greatly enhances the authority of the academic deans. The model incentivizes innovation and growth. Because SCE does not have its own faculty and partners with faculty members across academic units, the Dean must be attuned to this system in order to deliver SCE’s programming and initiatives. It will be imperative that the Dean understands this complexity and can encourage faculty members to support SCE’s efforts while balancing their faculty appointments to their home schools and colleges. The Dean will foster and maintain strong interdisciplinary relationships across the institution by ensuring financial transparency and increasing communication.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate will be a talented leader and scholar with a keen understanding of trends in continuing education today, as well as experience in working with students and faculty across a wide range of scholarly disciplines. The successful Dean will have a track record of entrepreneurial, transformative leadership that suggests they are able to inspire students, faculty, and staff to commit to a unified, strategic vision which moves the school towards greater prominence as a national leader in continuing education. While no single candidate will have all of the ideal qualifications, candidates should possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

**Academic Qualifications**

A terminal degree with previous university service is required. Successful candidates must qualify for a faculty appointment concurrent with an administrative appointment.
Professional Skills and Attributes

- Track record of engaging, visible, and collaborative leadership with the ability to foster successful organizational change.
- Commitment to innovative and transformational teaching and service.
- Experience with developing and implementing high quality online educational programs.
- Experience with developing on-campus and off-campus educational programs.
- Commitment to non-traditional learners.
- Academic leadership experience.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging as evidenced by actions and achievements related to workplace culture, campus engagement, community engagement, and institutional programming.
- Successful management of a complex organization within an academic setting and experience working collaboratively with other academic units.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Evidence of advanced analytical capabilities and utilization of data for development of programs.
- Communication skills that inspire, build trust and confidence, and motivate.
- Ability to build effective relationships within the school, across the campus with faculty and staff partners, and external stakeholders and philanthropic donors.

TO APPLY

Inquiries, nominations, and applications, in the form of a CV and cover letter, should be sent in strict confidence to:

Kate Barry, Partner
Alycia Johnson, Managing Associate
Karson Freeman, Associate

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 embraces diversity and seeks candidates who will contribute to a climate that supports students, faculty, and staff of all identities and backgrounds. We strongly encourage individuals from underrepresented and/or marginalized identities to apply.