**Executive Summary**

The HR function continues to provide critically important services to Cornell. However, we must continue to evolve in order to provide the leadership and support required to recruit, hire and retain top performing talent that will support university priorities. With attention to diversity and inclusion in all we do and an understanding of the university's mission, we are prepared to make Cornell’s workforce world class.

The following overview and assessment outlines the pressures we face and the opportunities before us. To align our efforts, the division’s FY14 priorities are identified along with some key organizational changes that will help us focus our resources on priority work.

I am excited about these changes and believe they will provide a better opportunity for our HR organization to be successful as we tackle the challenges ahead. I appreciate what the staff in HR do every day to serve the Cornell community and hope the changes in the organization will provide some of you with new ways to contribute. I look forward to working with you to advance our priorities and continue to enhance on our own work environment.

Mary Opperman  
Vice President, Human Resources and Safety Services

**Plan Contents**

- Overview
- Current Environmental Pressures
- Internal Assessment of Human Resources – Opportunities
- HR Priorities
- Organizational Adjustments
- Glossary of Terms

**Overview**

*Working with Mary Opperman, the directors of Human Resources have compiled the following report that provides a new framework for HR engagement across the university. The next steps and the future effectiveness of HR at Cornell depend on all of us.*

In a January 2011 report, “The Top 10 Best Practices for the High Impact HR Organization” Bersin and Associates noted that, on the path to excellence, HR organizations must first get the basics right, and they should focus on becoming excellent through evolution, not revolution.
The report points to 10 best practices necessary for an HR organization to have real impact in the organization it serves:

1. Structured governance and business case development
2. Development of advanced workforce planning* capabilities
3. Implementing a meaningful HR philosophy
4. Reducing administrative work for HR partners
5. Implementing a flexible HR design
6. Improving employee-facing HR systems
7. Measuring both HR operational and business metrics
8. Developing internal HR skills
9. Improving line manager capabilities
10. Outsourcing HR services strategically

*"Workforce planning" is a systematic process that looks at what an organization needs to accomplish in a given period of time due to business goals and strategies; what knowledge, skills and experience are required to get the job done; and, what size and type of workforce is required to provide that mix of skills, knowledge and experience. The workforce planning process then compares current workforce data on employees, as well as external data on workforce segments, and creates a gap analysis that highlights general workforce needs, critical talent segments and their needs, and required workforce reductions to meet business needs.

At Cornell we have worked on many of these identified best practices and have made progress in some areas, however we still have work to do in many areas. We must respond more rapidly to the changing needs of Cornell and the changing workforce and talent pools. We are positioned now, better than ever, to sharpen our focus on basic services and to advance these best practices.

The implementation of an effective HR information system creates a necessary foundation upon which Cornell’s Division of HR can now solidify greater alignment between more efficient and effective services and link them to Cornell’s core missions. Key elements of this plan are an approach to organizational effectiveness that supports process improvement and streamlining; talent strategies that attract, retain, engage and develop key and diverse talent; and a focus on supporting managers, meeting leadership expectations and advancing succession planning.

To be successful in this effort there must be a strong linkage between organizational results and total-reward systems, through competency-based career and development planning, and robust succession management. The programs of the human resources functions must align to deliver on institutional goals and be underpinned by understandable analytics that staff and leaders need in order to align their understanding of how meeting objectives advances university goals and how doing so results in greater rewards. There are many aspects of Cornell’s HR operation that run well, but the function needs to be better aligned and administrative procedures need to be further streamlined.

**Current Environmental Pressures**

The Great Recession caused the university to reduce its staff workforce by more than 9% at a time that the nation is becoming more racially/ethnically diverse and employers around the world are experiencing greater age diversity in the workplace. At the same time faculty renewal has begun in earnest and, as staff retire and new staff are recruited, diversity of the workforce
will increase. According to Census Bureau information and U.S. Labor Department predictions, the Hispanic and Asian populations are expected to double between now and 2060, and as of 2015, there will be five generations in the workforce with different expectations about how they will perform their work. These demographic changes will significantly impact our recruitment strategies and our structure for completing work, if we are to remain competitive. Resources will continue to be constrained and Cornell will look for different ways to meet its obligations to students, advance innovations and serve its public service mission. Work on the campus will become more complex, requiring broader skills and the ability to work with a diverse faculty, staff and student population.

We will need to build a diverse, agile, lean workforce to meet the university’s mission. Recruiting this talent will not be easy, as we will be competing with other leading organizations. However, these challenges mean the university will rely more heavily on the HR function. This gives us a great opportunity to shape the future of the university by finding new talent and invigorating the current workforce to growth with us.

We have the plan that will help take us into that future.

**Internal Assessment of Human Resources – Opportunities**

After analyzing the current state of our division, and reviewing feedback about the HR operation that has been shared over the last few years, the following assessment has been developed. It frames the key opportunities we must address in order to effectively advance a best practice operation in the coming years. Each opportunity brings a set of challenges that must be acknowledged. As we create stronger organizational alignment and linkages these challenges will be easier to identify, permitting us to plan and execute reasonable solutions. Resource constraints may require us to make difficult choices about the order in which we tackle these challenges. The division will likely make more rapid progress in some areas while planning for more long-term execution in other areas. We must stay committed and strive to become a best practice organization in all of our priority areas.

- **Create alignment** - The whole must be greater than the sum of our parts. There can be no success within component parts of the campus related to HR, whether it is within a college/unit, within a specialty area or considering HR apart from the broader missions of the university.

  o Top talent expects fluidity in terms of career movement, and when we recruit into Cornell, we should do so with an understanding that ambition and career goals are healthy and keeping talented staff at Cornell will require a university commitment to do so.

  o Linking information from performance reviews, training, competency assessments and position requirements is essential for this movement to occur effectively. As additional functionality comes online Workday will permit this linkage but each of these components MUST:
    - be simple to use and understand by all generations;
    - be used by managers and staff who are well trained;
    - leverage technology to make us more productive, and;
• be management led.

- **Integrate a focus on workforce diversity and workplace inclusion into every aspect of the HR system** – Diversifying our workforce and creating an inclusive work environment are integral to the success of the university. Diversity must be integrated into every aspect of HR’s work and the responsibility of each HR professional.
  - Our entire HR system described above should see diversity and inclusion as key elements of our core mission. Outreach and recruitment efforts must include sourcing individuals of diverse backgrounds, and HR must advance policies, programs and services that establish an integrated, aligned system to support the needs of a talented workforce. If HR is doing its job well, these programs and services will attract and retain a diverse workforce.
  - The university’s Toward New Destinations initiative, driven by the University Diversity Council, should provide the framework for how HR develops its programs for staff and faculty and how employment practices are integrated into HR operations.
  - To attract and retain diverse talent requires particular emphasis on the unique needs of our under-represented communities as we strive to increase our overall diversity.
    - To more effectively recruit diverse populations, we need to foster existing, and develop new, partnerships with organizations in the local community as well as represented nationally, that address the employment interests of diverse populations.
    - To better respond to the needs of a more diverse workforce we must increase our own cultural competency and encourage Cornell community to increase its cultural competency as well.

- **Place an emphasis on supporting top leadership** –
  - From the president through the vice presidents, vice provosts and deans, we need to support our top leadership. Identifying, on-boarding, supporting and planning for succession of leadership is critical to the operation of the university.
    - This aspect of HR has not been given enough attention and as the university faces continual challenges, the importance of having a cohort of leaders who have a clear sense of the mission and of their roles, as individual leaders and as institutional leaders, becomes clear.
      - Leadership on-boarding – both socially and professionally – is critical.
      - Leadership support in the first year to answer questions and provide advice and connections is also critical.
      - Team-based support and leadership planning is key for university leaders.
  - Succession planning of the leadership team is critical. We will need to develop and adopt processes to make this process part of the on-going management of the executive level of the university.
- It is also important to train top leadership about why this is an important process for them to use within their own organizations.
  - Creating a sustainable process that can be cascaded throughout the university will increase the alignment of the career movement aspect of the talent management system.
- Succession planning is also important at the Board of Trustee level and should be supported by human resources as well.

- **Position Human Resources as a valued business partner supporting management decision-makers** – The climate in the various work units of the university are most impacted by the actions taken each day by managers and supervisors. The most valuable services HR can provide to managers and leaders are solid data and analysis, and trusted advice and counsel that enhance a manager’s ability to manage.
  - It is vital that managers take responsibility for their teams – from creating effective positions to developing and rewarding talent to engaging in healthy problem resolution strategies.
  - We need to prepare leaders not only with data but with knowledgeable insight so they can manage their staff and business strategies effectively.
  - People are the most valuable asset of an organization. HR’s expertise in acquiring, engaging and developing talent will help managers achieve their objectives and deliver results.
  - When managers plan their human resources strategically - as they do their financial resources - HR professionals will be called on to provide more sophisticated modeling, forecasting and benchmarking.
  - HR staff across campus need to embrace the role of advisor and counselor and offer information to enable managers to address employee relations, compliance and other issues they face within their units.

- **Recognize top performance** - We must recognize top performance by supporting and encouraging staff career development opportunities and by demonstrating appreciation for contributions and achievements. It is essential that strategies be deployed that reinforce positive work behaviors and help build a culture of value that attracts and retains those with top performance.

  We must create simpler policies that enable and encourage managers to address performance issues directly, quickly and constructively:
  - Provide direct feedback and offer opportunities for additional training, where appropriate
  - Streamline disciplinary processes, when that is the appropriate process, to be addressed in a reasonable timeframe
  - Ensure HR generalists know and understand these timeframes and are well trained to provide advice.
• **Bolster organizational effectiveness** – An underpinning of an effective university is an organization that has thought through its work processes and determined how to use its resources. Organizational Effectiveness is the key to Cornell’s future.
  o Organizational effectiveness is critical to the successful use of talent within an aligned system. It is essential that each college and unit, and the university as a whole, tackle the difficult task of aligning work to available resources – shedding bureaucracy, streamlining processes and making hard choices with remaining work until what is left aligns with the staff and financial resources within the organization.
  o We must support these efforts with specific tools that can quickly help leaders work through these tough choices. While the choices remain for the leaders, it is the case that tools are available to assist the leaders, and these tools need to be used consistently across the university so decisions are made within a consistent framework and possible complementarities are identified.

• **Reconfirm the centrality of the HR business partner role** - All best-of-class HR functions know their organizations very, very well. They understand what is happening in the organization and in their specific units and pivot their programs and services to respond to changing needs. They understand how decisions are made and use those decision-making models to get HR work done. It is critical that our central operations be fully tuned in to what is happening – not just at the university level, but at the colleges and within the units as well. Likewise, HR generalists should be able to turn to central specialists for best practice information and for efficient services that support emerging needs.
  o HR Council must serve as the information-sharing vehicle for business partners and with central specialists.
  o HR Council members should come prepared for discussions and inform their college/unit leaders and HR teams of issues discussed at meetings.
  o HR Academic Council needs to be active in addressing the issues in academic policies.

• **Drive key HR actions by data-driven decisions** - Decisions regarding the effectiveness of HR programs and services that advance the organization towards its core missions must be made through the use of data. Workday provides the mechanism to gather internal data we need to make informed decisions.
  o HR must assign resources and apply a disciplined approach to collecting, considering and sharing this data with leadership. Industry benchmark data and qualitative data round out this internal quantitative data and all are needed for HR to fulfill its responsibilities.
  o HR data should enable managers to set and assess progress and performance, quickly identify problems and potential efficiencies, and forecast needs and trends.
  o Data provides us with the ability to shift from a reactive, transaction-based function to a proactive, strategic-based partner that can provide valuable organizational leadership.
• **Reduce the bureaucracy in HR** - Ensure that policies are appropriately written and managers are adequately educated on their role and where to go for information and advice. We need to be our own harshest critic. If processes take weeks or months to get through, or if a manager has to rely on an HR generalist to understand a policy because of the way it is written, we need to make a change. This is critical to make Cornell’s workforce world class.
  
  o We need to make it much easier for a manager to understand how a position compares to others on the campus, and how pay compares to market. We need to make it possible for top performers to have their jobs assessed quickly and have their contributions recognized. Our process should be responsive and facilitate the conversation between the decision maker and the staff member.
  
  o Benefits should be well understood and celebrated. They should be viewed and appreciated as the compensation they are. Questions about them should be answered quickly, effectively and happily.
  
  o Policies should be simple and direct. Guidance that is not university-wide is not a policy and should be re-thought. Procedures should be simplified and made consistent across the campus.

**HR FY14 Priorities**

As we begin a new fiscal year we have several priorities that continue from FY13 and others, which are based on addressing the opportunities above. Each one provides us tremendous opportunity to continue to build our community by partnering together, committing to positive outcomes, working smarter and building a singular HR direction for the university.

1. Lead effective diversity efforts, in alignment with Toward New Destinations
2. Improve workforce planning efforts:
   a. Increase targeted diversity recruitment efforts
   b. Continue succession planning process
   c. Assess current skills needs and shortages
   d. Advance a targeted career planning/training approach to fill gaps
3. Address the issues identified in the staff survey
4. Stabilize and optimize Workday
5. Agree on HR operational and organizational metrics
6. Increase the efficiency of HR operations:
   a. Identify opportunities to streamline HR procedures
   b. Maintain cost-effective benefit programs and collaboratively develop healthy campus outreach efforts.
   c. Advance organizational effectiveness strategies, including LEAN, that support campus efforts to increase efficiency
Organizational Adjustments

To advance an integrated, aligned system of programs and services, establish a more direct governance structure and enable career growth, several changes are being made to the structure of the Division of Human Resources as detailed below.

Redesigned HR leadership structure:

- **AVP of Operations for HR & Safety Services**: Betsy Shrier will hold this position and will focus on enhancing the division’s infrastructure and operating foundation as well as advancing our divisional data analytics efforts. In addition to the operational aspects of finance, facilities, communication, and IT for the division of HR&SS and events planning for HR, Betsy will also oversee:
  - the HR Information Systems including Workday and CU Learn
  - and manage special assignment from the VP

- **AVP of Human Resources**: Allan Bishop will hold this position. He will be responsible for overseeing core HR programs and services that support our talented workforce. In addition to the ongoing leadership of his existing organization, he will assume oversight responsibility for:
  - Benefits
  - Work and Family Services
  - Workforce Policy and Labor Relations

- **AVP of Organizational Effectiveness**: Chris Halladay will hold this position. He will be responsible for partnering with colleges and units to align work to available resources, integrate talent planning, address compensation job structure, and support leadership and staff development. Chris will also oversee:
  - Compensation

As a result of the organizational realignment, Lynette Chappell-Williams, AVP Inclusion and Workforce Diversity will be positioned to concentrate more fully on a leadership role within the University Diversity Council in identifying institutional strategies to advance diversity broadly defined, providing advice and counsel to HR on best practices in all areas of diversity and inclusion as well as leading our Affirmative Action and Title IX efforts.

HR Council serves as the information-sharing vehicle for business partners and central specialists. To continue to promote HR Council’s role in serving the needs of the college and units, Tony Caudill will take the lead in soliciting input, developing the agendas and leading Council meetings. Tony will continue to lead the HR functions of College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Sandy Dhimitri will take the lead in Academic HR and the formation of an Academic HR Council that will address the issues of academic policies. She will continue to lead the HR functions for Human Ecology and University Library.
Glossary of Terms

- **Succession planning**: a process for identifying and developing internal people with the potential to fill key leadership positions in the organization.

- **Organizational effectiveness**: the concept of how effective an organization is in achieving the outcomes the organization intends to produce.

- **Process improvement**: a systematic approach to help an organization optimize its underlying processes to achieve more efficient results.

- **Streamlining**: to construct or design in a form that offers the least resistance to fluid flow. Streamlining of processes not people.

- **Talent strategies**: using strategic HR to improve value and make it possible for organizations to reach their goals.

- **Total-reward systems**: all of the tools available to the employer that may be used to attract, motivate and retain employees.

- **Competency-based career and development planning**: development programs that allow employees to progress through a phased program of development aimed at increasing employee competencies and preparing them to take on increased responsibility.