Cornell celebrates the excellence of our staff and faculty with awards and appreciation events throughout the year.

Recognizing Excellence

High Five Employee Recognition Program

High Five is a university-wide program to celebrate the contributions of Cornell employees and recognize excellence. It was formed in response to feedback from the 2011 Employee Survey. The High Five program includes both formal and informal recognition events:

Employee Excellence Awards

Nominations are solicited from all employees to recognize excellence from individuals, managers, and for innovation in diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the President’s Award, “Far Above Cayuga’s Waters” is selected from the nominees. Winners are announced at a celebration luncheon attended by Cornell’s president, vice president and chief human resources officer, the nominees, their guests, and supervisors. Click here for more information, including nominating forms and a list of past recipients.

RED Days (Recognition Event Days)

RED Days are a fun, informal way of showing appreciation for Cornell’s hardworking
employees. Several times a year, treats such as cupcakes or ice cream (as well as fruit and other dietary options) are distributed to employees from stations across Cornell campuses. There are also RED Days sales held in conjunction with the Cornell Store that offer discounts to staff and faculty.

Constance E. Cook and Alice H. Cook Awards

Awarded to recognize a commitment to women’s issues and improvement of the climate for women at Cornell. The awards are named for Constance Cook, Cornell’s first woman vice president, and Alice Cook (no relation to Constance), one of the first women faculty members at the ILR School. Both were early advocates for women at Cornell.

Staff Kudos

An annual luncheon recognizing staff members who are nominated by Cornell faculty or staff for going above and beyond in their work. Nominations can be submitted to the Employee Assembly through an online form.

Faculty Awards and Recognition

The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GPSA) accepts nominations for the annual awards for excellence in the teaching, advising, and mentoring of graduate and professional students at Cornell.

George Peter Award for Dedicated Service

Awarded to Cornell staff members who consistently demonstrate a high degree of excellence in the performance of their duties and who prove their willingness to extend themselves to help others and go above and beyond the normal expectations of their job responsibilities. The award is the longest running and most prestigious university-wide peer-nominated award.

Opperman Award for Staff Advocacy

The award, which was created in honor of Vice President Mary Opperman, is given semiannually by the Employee Assembly to an employee who consistently demonstrates commitment to encouraging and supporting staff excellence. All Cornell staff, faculty and academic professionals are eligible for consideration for this award. Nominations can be submitted by staff members only.

Cornell University Partners in Sustainability Awards

The Cornell University Partners in Sustainability Awards (CUPSA) recognize individuals and teams who have exemplified the sustainability values of Cornell, made significant and notable contributions to the sustainable development and social equity of the Cornell campus, or displayed outstanding partnership for advancing sustainability within our campus and community. Nominate yourself and your team, or other outstanding members of
Service Recognition Program

Recognizes staff milestones of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 years of service to the university. This tradition of recognition is a grateful celebration of the outstanding staff whose work contributes to the success of Cornell’s students, faculty, alumni, and colleagues at the university. Congratulations to this year’s awardees!

Staff Graduate Reception

For employees who receive degrees through Employee Degree Program. This event promotes the university's pride in those employees who achieve their educational goals while also maintaining their job responsibilities. Those graduating should notify Benefit Services at (607) 255-3936 or benefits@cornell.edu to be included in this celebration.

Appreciation Events

Bring a Child to Work Day

An entertaining and educational opportunity for children ages 8-16 to visit the Cornell University campus, explore interests and careers through activities, and see what parents, relatives and/or friends do at their jobs at Cornell.

Employee Celebrations

Employee Celebrations are open to staff, faculty, retirees, and their families. These popular events feature athletic competitions, a Cornell community meal, and additional family-oriented activities. Employee Celebrations are held twice a year, in the fall and in the winter.

Jennie T. Farley Office Professionals Celebration

Recognizes all office professionals for the important role they play on campus and the changing nature of their profession. Named for its co-founder and a late faculty member of ILR, the event draws more than 750 office professionals from across campus and is one of the largest workplace observances at Cornell.