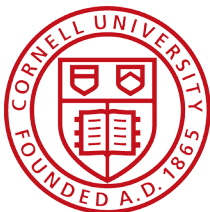


Cornell University

Retiree Engagement Report

Fall 2019



A celebration of Cornell University's 5,779 retired faculty, academics, and staff.





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INTRODUCTION

In May 2019, the Division of Human Resources invited retired faculty, academic professionals, and staff to participate in its inaugural Cornell Retiree Engagement Survey.

Eight hundred fifty-one individuals (or approximately 15% of the retiree population of 5,779) completed the survey, which was designed to capture information about the many ways retirees contribute to and actively engage with Cornell, the community, their families, and the world.

During their years of service, Cornell's retirees helped shape and care for our campuses; educated and supported generations of students; advanced research and publications; developed and implemented policies, programs, and procedures; and much more. Their contributions have furthered Cornell's reputation for excellence and paved the way for today's achievements.

Many retirees return to Cornell in paid and volunteer capacities, such as working part-time, mentoring/advising, serving on committees, and helping with events such as commencement. Retirees also make significant contributions to programs and services about which they are passionate. In addition to their hundreds of hours of volunteer service, from FY15 to FY19 retirees made financial donations to the university totaling 26.5 million dollars (see page 10 for details).

Survey respondents inspired us with detailed accounts of their encore careers, creative endeavors, travels, awards, publications, and community involvement.

The digital version of this report and supplemental documents are available at hr.cornell.edu/retiree-report.

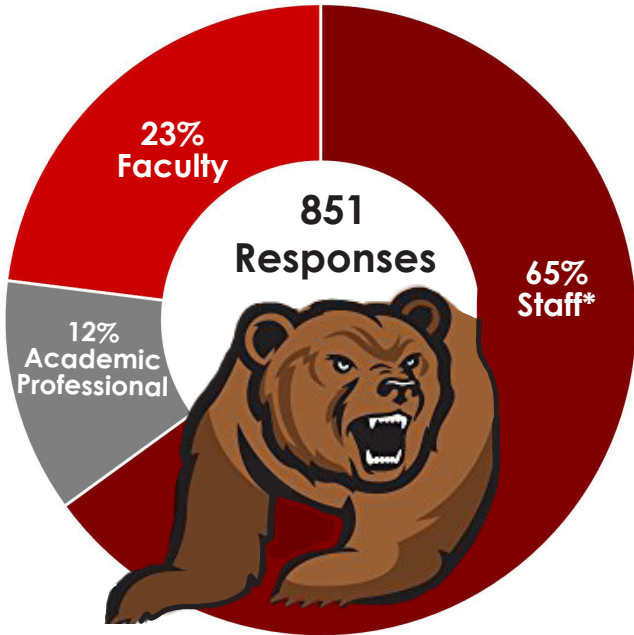
Readers can explore a comprehensive list of survey comments (in each retiree's own words, with identifying information removed) related to specific survey questions (volunteering, encore careers, creative endeavors, and travel).

It is important to acknowledge that many retirees are facing personal challenges related to caregiving, health, and/or other concerns. Cornell's resources to support retiree caregivers are listed on page 20.

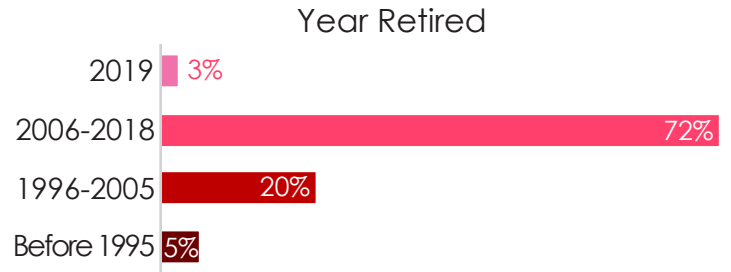
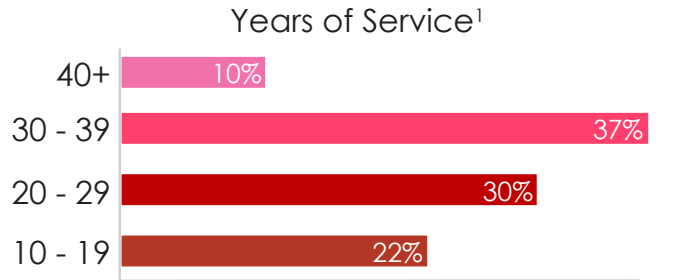
Among Cornell's thousands of retired faculty, academic professionals, and staff are those who have been volunteering, working, traveling, publishing, and caring for others for years, even decades. Retirement is not a static state, and the activities they are currently engaged in may be different from those in which they were involved during earlier phases of retirement. This report is not designed to chronicle the history of Cornell's retirees. Rather, it should be viewed as a snapshot in time, focused on the past five years. We hope it will become the first in a series of periodic retiree updates.

The Retiree Engagement Survey also collected input about retirees' level of interest in campus activities, utilization of campus resources, and challenges limiting their participation. While not included in this report, this valuable information will be used to guide the Division of Human Resources and other departments in developing programming and expanding access for retirees. We thank respondents for the information they provided.

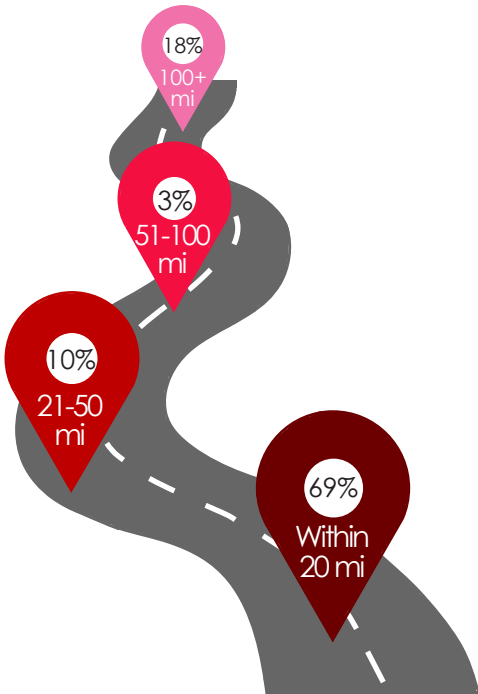
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS AND HIGHLIGHTS



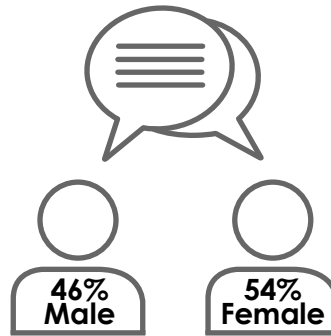
*includes Bargaining Unit staff



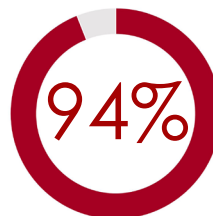
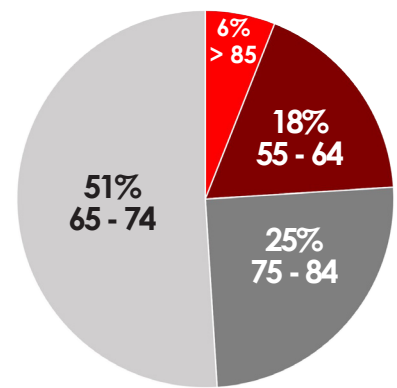
Distance of Primary Residence from Nearest Cornell Campus



Gender²



Age



of respondents indicated they retired from Cornell's Ithaca campus.

¹ Does not total 100% due to rounding and a few retiree respondents were not official retirees of Cornell.

² Providing gender information was optional on the survey, and 7% of respondents did not provide gender information. Additionally, 0.26% of respondents selected "transgender" or "other" on the survey.

In the last 5 years...



53%
pursued creative endeavors



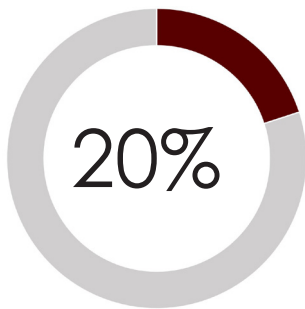
42%
provided care for another person



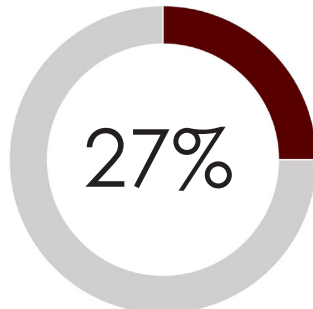
20%
received awards or recognition



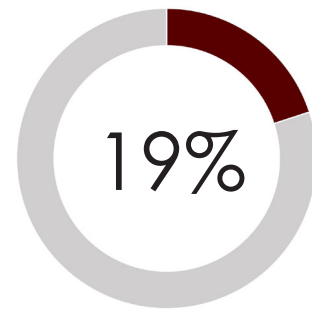
24%
contributed to professional publications



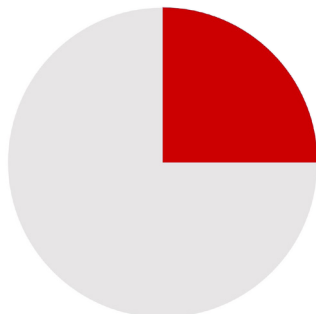
returned to a paid position at Cornell



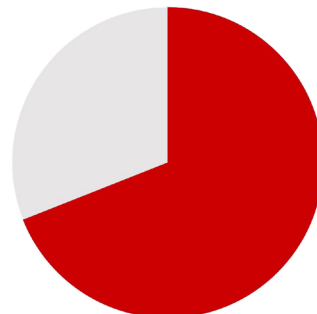
began an encore career outside of Cornell



were self-employed



25%
volunteered at Cornell

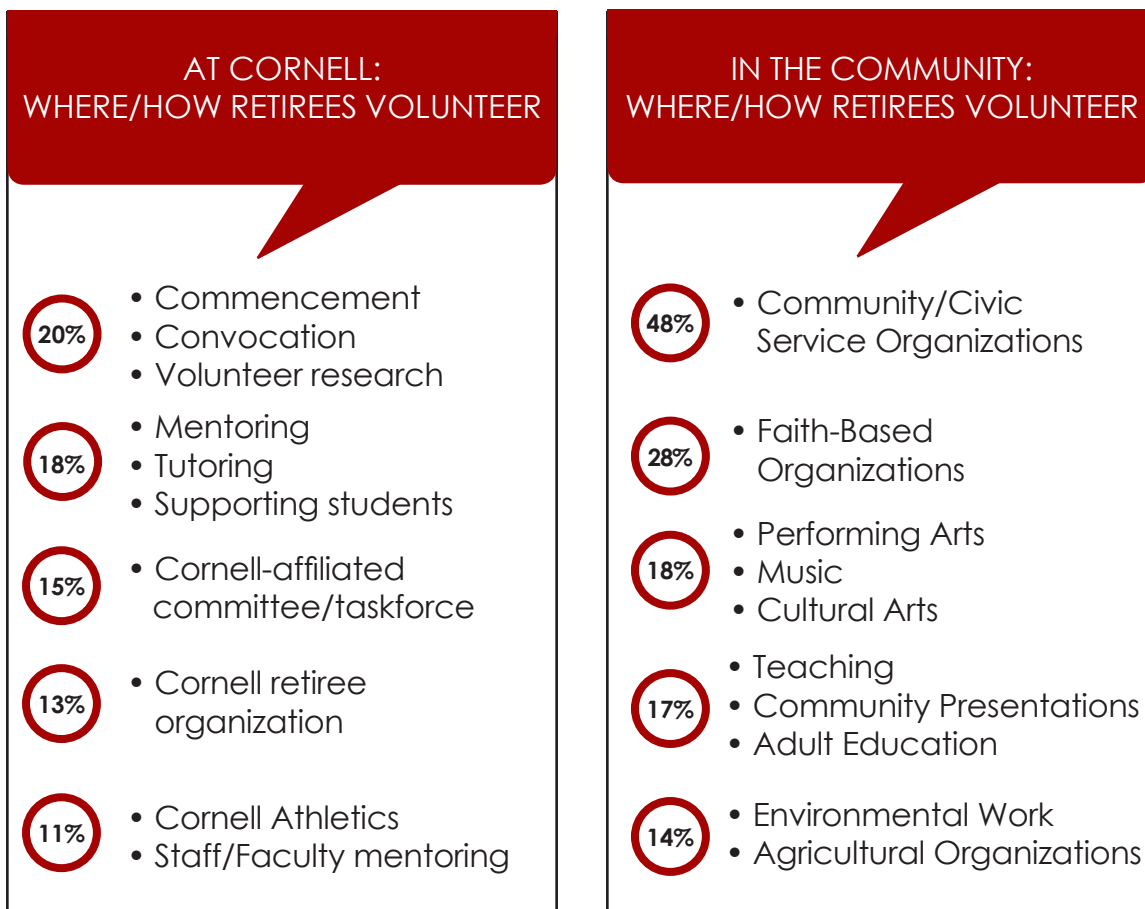


69%
volunteered outside Cornell

VOLUNTEERING

Twenty-five percent of retirees who completed the survey indicated that they had volunteered at and/or for Cornell during the past five years. Sixty-nine percent indicated that they had volunteered outside of Cornell during that same time period. While most volunteered close to home, wherever they currently reside, others traveled around the world to help with recovery after natural disasters to provide specialized expertise to communities, or lend a hand wherever one was needed.

Cornell retiree volunteers are rarely engaged in just one volunteer activity.¹ One of the most remarkable aspects of the stories shared by our retirees who volunteer is how diverse and varied the commitments of any given individual may be.



¹ Responses are not mutually exclusive, as many retirees volunteer in multiple capacities.

"I started to teach Tai Chi as part of the Taoist Tai Chi Society when I worked at Cornell. When I retired and moved to North Carolina, I started a branch here that has over 300 members now."



"I volunteered for four months in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria. I assisted FEMA by guiding Spanish-speaking persons to aid."

"With Cornell Companions, my dog and I visited retirement communities, correctional facilities, libraries, festivals, the Vet College Open House, daycare centers, Procrastinate at the Straight, etc..."



"I volunteer with the Senior Community Chorus to sing familiar songs at nursing homes in our area. We have a marvelous director as well as piano and guitar accompanists. The entertainment is ultra-stimulating for the residents and truly makes them come alive."

"For the past 25 years I have been a Lincoln re-enactor, sharing Lincoln stories with different adult audiences and school children. Each year, some 18 different fourth grade classes visit Craven Hall, a restored colonial farmhouse, where they get to spend time with Mr. Lincoln."



"I'm interested in auto racing and sports cars. I've volunteered my time working as a Flag Marshall and corner worker at Watkins Glen International raceway. This service provides a degree of track safety for drivers and spectators."

GIVING

In addition to volunteering on campus and in the community, Cornell retirees make generous financial donations.¹ Within the past five fiscal years, roughly one out of every six retirees has given financially to Cornell – 997 donations totaling 26.5 million dollars.² Many gifts support specific colleges, program funds, scholarships, or special services available to current employees, such as the Emergency CARE Fund. Also, 1,605 Cornell retirees made pledges totaling \$838,000 to United Way in the past five fiscal years.

In the past 5 years, **997** Cornell retirees have given **\$26.5M** to Cornell.

Retiree Donations to Cornell University, FY15-19

Donation Range	No. of Donors
\$1 - \$499	621
\$500 - \$999	92
\$1,000 - \$4,999	152
\$5,000 - \$9,999	40
\$10,000 - \$24,999	47
\$25,000 - \$99,999	18
> \$100,000	27

Ithaca



¹ While the survey did not ask retirees about their financial contributions, we have included this data to highlight an important (and much appreciated) way retirees give back.

² As reported by Cornell Alumni Affairs & Development. Includes donations from surviving retirees and those who passed away during the five fiscal year look-back.

GLOBAL.

NATIONAL.

REGIONAL.

LOCAL.



Rome



Qatar



Washington, D.C.



New York City



Geneva

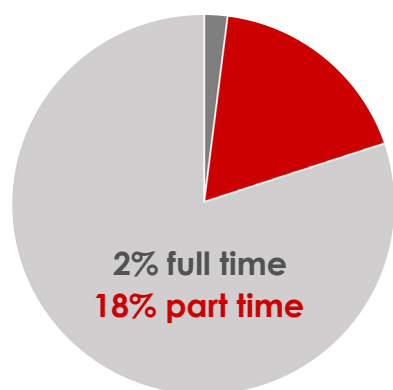
Retirees also made **1,605** pledges to the
United Way of Tompkins County
in the past 5 years, totaling...



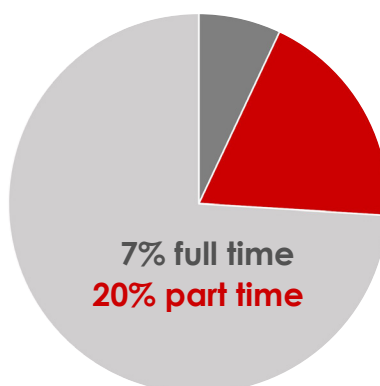
\$838k

WORK & ENCORE CAREERS

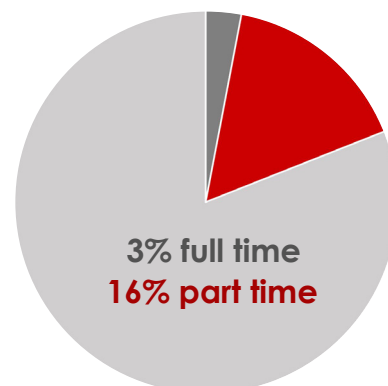
Twenty percent of survey respondents returned to work at Cornell at some point during the past five years; twenty-seven percent engaged in paid work outside of Cornell; and nineteen percent launched their own businesses or continued entrepreneur ventures begun before they officially retired¹. Across all sectors, retirees were five times more likely to return to the workforce part time as opposed to full time.



returned to a paid position at Cornell



began an encore career outside Cornell



were self-employed

Cornell retirees have found opportunities to continue their careers or reinvent themselves in new roles in almost every aspect of the workforce. From innkeeping to beekeeping; finance to farming; public service to pyrotechnics; teaching in Ithaca to conducting research around the globe; retail to real estate – and every sector in between – Cornell retirees are doing it all! While some retirees indicated they returned to work because of financial constraints, the vast majority indicated they wanted to continue to do the work they loved (often on their own terms, with a reduced workload and ample time for other endeavors), or to try their hand at something completely new. As of July 2019, 300² retirees are actively employed at Cornell, either part or full time.

¹ Because some of these retirees were engaged in two or even all three of these sectors, these percentages – combined with the percentage of retirees who indicated they had not engaged in paid work in each of these sectors – do not add up to 100%.

² Includes temporary and casual workers.



“I worked for the New York State Parks and Historic Preservation at Taughannock Falls State Park. I maintained the park trails, grounds, cabins and facilities.”

“I have a fine art photography business.”



“My main research interest is measuring physical properties of minerals believed to make up Earth's interior. I designed my own instruments, and when others asked if I would make one for them, decided to start my own business.”

“I have continued to participate as a researcher in sponsored research funded by the National Institute of Health.”



“I work at a local retirement home as a transportation person. I take the residents to medical appointments all over the state.”

“I am assisting with training evaluation for a US Air Force Family Support program in North Carolina.”



“I returned to work at Cornell as a part-time casual employee earlier this year, and I could not be happier! I feel part of the campus again!”

CREATIVE ENDEAVORS

“All the world’s a stage...” or a canvas... or a garden... or a musical score!

Over 50% of survey respondents reported they have been engaged in one or more creative pursuits during the past five years. Forty-three percent of those who indicated they participated in creative pursuits were involved in aspects of writing. Forty percent were involved in creative endeavors such as woodworking, needlework, jewelry making, etc. Thirty percent were involved in media and/or visual arts, and 18% were active in performing arts.¹

53%

**OF SURVEY
RESPONDENTS
have undertaken
creative endeavors**



5%

**were involved in
home renovation
or architectural
design**

43%

**were involved in
writing (blogging,
online papers,
technical writing,
etc...)**

“I transcribed my father's letters home during WWII and made a book with them and photos from the family albums and his military notebooks. I have also undertaken some other projects related to my family history.”

“I am converting a 20-year-old storage shed into a hobby room. Renovation includes replacing rotten siding and flooring, upgrading the building for energy efficiency, extending electric service from the main residence, and providing site drainage and floor/wall/ceiling finishes.”



40%

**were involved in
crafts and artistry
(woodworking,
sewing, knitting,
jewelry-making, etc...)**

“I’ve made afghans for my nieces and nephew and baby afghans for their children. Now I’m working on afghans for my grand nieces and nephews as they graduate from high school.

I’ve also made some small afghans for the local SPCA cats and lap blankets for residents in nursing homes.”

¹ Because many of these retirees were engaged in multiple forms of creative expression, percentages do not add up to 100%.

"I'm a member of Harmony Falls chorus. We've qualified for the International level of competition in the Silver Division of Harmony Inc. every year since 2015."

"I am making a documentary on bird migration in the Finger Lakes regions, where I document seeing millions of birds during migration."

15%

**were involved in media arts
(photography, video
production, video blogging)**

"I'm still publishing research findings."

"I play guitar and do vocals for a classic rock cover band that does 40-50 gigs a year in the Finger Lakes region."



18%

**were involved in
the performing arts**

"As a member of the State of the Art Gallery in Ithaca, I have artwork on display all through the year. I also teach private classes on photography, digital imaging, and art creation."

10%

**were involved in
landscape design,
gardening, or
farming**

"Each year my flower gardens have expanded and changed. Most of my garden is perennial plants, but I discovered that placing them for appropriate sun/shade and gauging their projected growth is a full-time job. I started doing this for fun, and it has piqued my creative interest through the years."

15%

**were involved in
the visual arts
(drawing, painting,
sculpture)**



14%

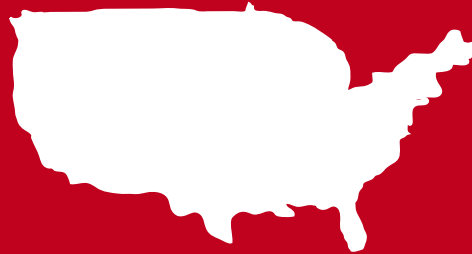
**were involved
in culinary arts**



TRAVEL



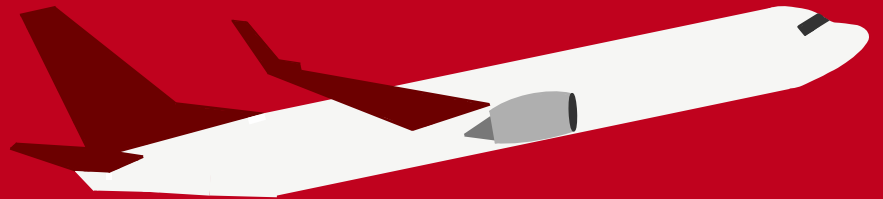
55%
traveled within
New York State



80%
traveled within
the USA



49%
traveled
internationally



"We were fortunate to have chosen mid-March of this year to go to California to see the desert wildflower spring bloom. We had never done it before, and this year was spectacular. We spent the bulk of our time at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Joshua Tree National Park, and the Mojave National Preserve."



"My wife and I have hiked in the Swiss Alps, New Zealand, and Bhutan; bicycled on multi-day trips in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and West Virginia; and bicycled across southern Sicily."



"I took a bus trip with a couple friends to see New York City "on your own." We experienced the subway, walked the Brooklyn Bridge, Ground Zero, took the Staten Island Ferry, and enjoyed Katz' Delicatessen fare."



"One of the highlights of our travel adventures was a month-long trip to Australia. It was an extraordinary experience to spend time in Sydney, Melbourne, Alice Springs, and Kangaroo Island on a fly-drive vacation. Because we stayed in Airbnb's, we got to meet local people and stay in a variety of places from a cottage in Sydney to a sheep farm on Kangaroo Island to a hotel in the Outback near Ayers Rock. It was an amazing experience!"



"I have been living on a sailboat during the winter months and traveling throughout the Caribbean."



"My husband and I are motorcyclists and Corvette owners. We have volunteered for many years as tour leaders at a major motorcycle rally in Lake George and the Adirondacks. We have traveled with the Glen Regional Corvette Club through the eastern United States."



"I have traveled with my siblings doing genealogy research for their Daughters of the American Revolution interests. We have visited libraries and historical societies in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. I also have used the online access of Ancestry.com through Cornell's library!"



"Recently we drove to Cajun country in Louisiana to celebrate Mardi Gras, as we have done for several years. We got to catch up with friends and enjoy Cajun food and the pre-Mardi Gras musical performances."



"I took a 2016 Hawaiian vacation with the group of women who were in my lab when I was studying for my PhD at Cornell."



"My husband had a goal of visiting all of the national parks. We went to quite a few, but eventually settled on spending two weeks every summer hiking in Glacier National Park in Montana."

AWARDS

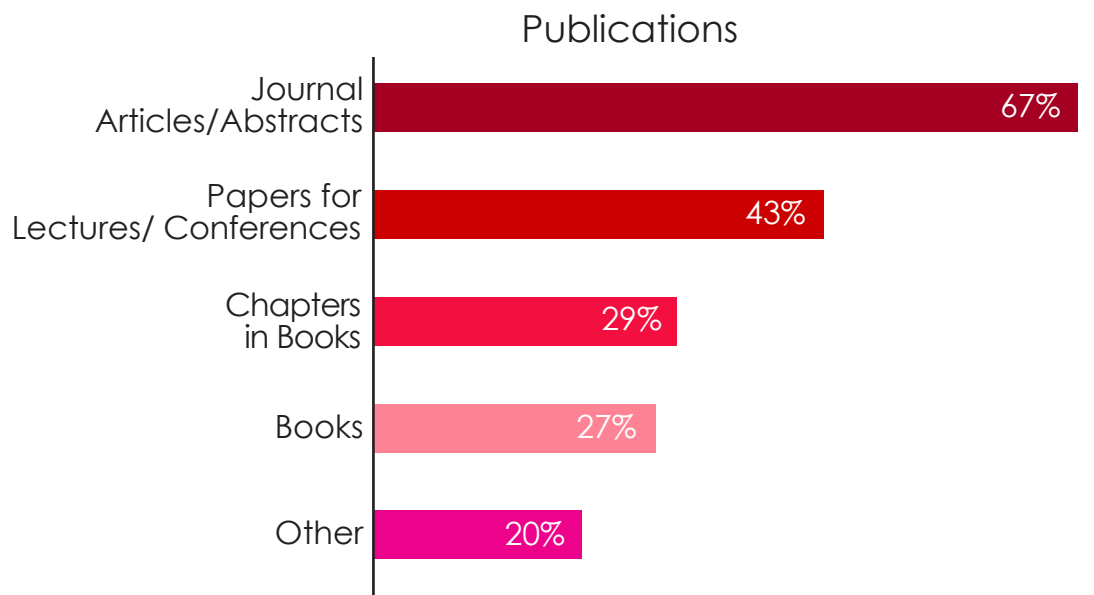
Twenty percent of survey respondents indicated that they had received accolades and/or formal recognition within the past five years. Cornell retirees were recognized for academic and technological distinction, creative excellence, outstanding service, and lifetime achievements; awarded honorary degrees; inducted into alumni and professional halls of fame; and acknowledged for exceptional contributions to their communities and community organizations. They were lauded for scholarship, artistry, athletic achievements, and altruism – a reflection of the varied aspects of their exceptional range of achievements.¹



¹ Please note that percentages do not add up to 100% as some individuals may have received an award/recognition from more than one type of organization.

PUBLICATIONS

Twenty-four percent of survey respondents indicated that they had authored, edited, and/or contributed to publications within the past five years. Retirees penned articles and abstracts; wrote and delivered papers at conferences and via lectures; composed and/or contributed chapters to books; scripted and/or edited novels, poetry, biographies/autobiographies, screenplays, musical scores, newspaper columns and/or articles, and more.¹



¹ Percentages do not add up to 100% as some individuals may have contributed to multiple types of publications.

CAREGIVING

For some, it is the pure joy of experiencing the world anew through the eyes of a grandchild. For others, it is the heartache of watching a loved one disappear into the clouds of dementia. For a full 42% of survey respondents, caregiving is a part of retirement.

Forty percent of those who indicated they are caregivers have played this role for a spouse/partner. Thirty-three percent have been caregivers for a parent and/or parent-in-law. Twenty percent have provided care to grandchildren. And many have provided care to all of these, as well as other family members and friends.

Regardless of the duration or extent, caregiving is often marked by uncertainty, highs and lows, time and resource demands, and a lot of questions. Caring for a loved one can be rewarding, but it can be equally challenging and isolating.

Cornell offers several resources and support services to help retirees and employees who are caregiving and/or dealing with other life challenges and transitions (see below).



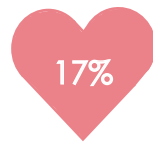
Spouse or Partner



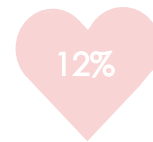
Parent or Parent-in-Law



Grandchild



Other family member



Friend

Work/Life - Human Resources

Provides free educational programs on topics such as adult/elder care and aging, many of which are available virtually. The work/life consultant is available to assist retirees with caregiving and self-care related concerns, regardless of location. Local caregivers are also invited to attend monthly Caregiver Support Group meetings.

East Hill Office Building, Suite 130
607-255-0388
worklife@cornell.edu
hr.cornell.edu/wellbeing-perks

Care@Work by Care.com

Caregivers often need helping hands. Benefits-eligible retirees have free national access to Care.com through the Cornell Care@Work platform. Members may search for caregivers, babysitters, pet/house sitters, housekeepers, and yardwork providers.

607-255-0388
worklife@cornell.edu
hr.cornell.edu/careatwork

Cornell Wellness

Self-care is critical for caregivers. Retirees can request a free wellness or nutrition consultation and participate in educational programs. Recreational memberships are also available to retirees and their partners, providing access to group exercise classes, fitness facilities, and other recreational activities.

Helen Newman Hall, 305
607-255-5133
wellness@cornell.edu
recreation.athletics.cornell.edu/wellness

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program

Provides counseling services to Cornell benefits-eligible retirees. Support is tailored to meet the unique needs of Cornell retirees, employees, and spouse/partners. Services are free, confidential, and provided by a licensed counselor.

312 College Avenue, Suite A
607-255-2673
fsap@cornell.edu
fsap.cornell.edu

GET INVOLVED



Organizations & Committees

Cornell Retirees Association (CRA)

All Cornell faculty and staff automatically become members of the Cornell Retirees Association upon retirement. Membership is voluntary and there are no annual dues. Events, activities, and newsletters are coordinated by Work/Life in Human Resources.

607-255-0388
worklife@cornell.edu
hr.cornell.edu/retirees

Cornell Academics & Professors Emeriti (CAPE)

CAPE provides a social and professional community for retired Cornell faculty, professional academic staff (researchers, librarians, extension associates, academic counselors or advisors), and those granted emeritus status by the University Board of Trustees.

607-255-6608
cape@cornell.edu
emeritus.cornell.edu



HR Retiree Engagement Advisory Committee (HR REAC)

HR REAC is comprised of retired faculty and staff, department representatives, and community experts. The committee advises on matters related to faculty and staff transitions to retirement as well as the post-retirement engagement of retirees.

607-255-0388
worklife@cornell.edu



Employee Assembly (EA)

In 2017, the Cornell Employee Assembly added a retiree representative seat to the membership. The seat is shared by two staff retirees to reduce the time commitment involved and add further perspective. To learn more, contact Work/Life in Human Resources.

607-255-0388
worklife@cornell.edu
assembly.cornell.edu

Monthly Retiree Newsletter

Features campus news, events, retiree profiles, volunteer opportunities, and job opportunities. Published by Work/Life in Human Resources. Not receiving it? Contact us!

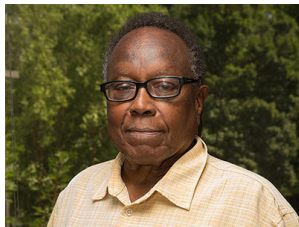
607-255-0388
worklife@cornell.edu
hr.cornell.edu/retirees

JOIN US!



“It has been an incredible experience to have the time to care for family members when they needed it, and to now consider what I want to do next. I’ve had the energy and time to begin to pursue more of the things that interest me.”

“My time working at Cornell after retirement was fun. I enjoyed meeting new people in other departments and loved not feeling the pressure of everyday work anymore. I enjoy my earned freedom of everyday, getting up in the morning with nothing to do but figure out my day as the day passes.”



“Retirement is a joy. I’m as busy as ever, but not as tired and my house is cleaner.”



“I found it very rewarding and downright fun to return to work for six part time employment stints after my official retirement in 2009. The work was challenging, but largely stress free and exposed me to many new people and departments with which I had not had previous regular interaction. It was great to stay connected to the life of the campus while transitioning to full retirement.”



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Division of Human Resources thanks the inaugural (est. 2017) and current members of the HR Retiree Engagement Advisory Committee for their service, input in the design of the survey, and review/application of the findings.

- Peggy Ann Andersen, Staff Retiree & Employee Assembly Representative
- Michelle Artibee, Associate Director, HR Work/Life
- Gordon Barger, Senior Director, HR Benefits
- Diane Bradac, Consultant, HR Work/Life
- David L. Brown, Faculty Emeritus
- Paul Bursic, Staff Retiree & Retirement Plan Oversight Committee Representative
- Brian Frank Chabot, Faculty Emeritus
- Linda Croll Howell, Director, HR Analytics & Work/Life
- Keri Anne Johnson, Wellness & Fitness Specialist, Cornell Wellness
- Amy E. Layton, Program Coordinator, HR Work/Life
- Cynthia Anne Robinson, Coordinator, Cornell Academics & Professors Emeriti
- Franklin W. Robinson, Faculty Emeritus
- Kathee Shaff, Staff Retiree (past member)
- Hurf Sheldon, Staff Retiree & Employee Assembly Representative
- Dominic A. Versage, Staff Retiree

We also thank past members of the Cornell Retirees Association Executive Board for their years of service and organization of events and activities for retirees.

This survey was inspired by the Council of University of California Retiree Association's 2016 survey, whom we thank for sharing their instrument.

Our thanks to Ruth Katz, Cornell HR Analytics, for designing and analyzing this comprehensive survey and for her extensive work on this report.

Most importantly, thank you to all retirees for your service and continued engagement with Cornell University.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was published by HR Work/Life. To request copies or digital files, please contact worklife@cornell.edu.

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Publication Year: 2019

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.

