STAFF CONVERSATIONS

FALL 2018
SUMMARY REPORT

Cornell University
Employee Assembly

"An Active Voice for Staff"

STAFF CONVERSATIONS – FALL 2018 SUMMARY REPORT

This past fall, 2018, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Mary Opperman, Senior Director HR Strategy Reginald White, and the Employee Assembly teamed up to host 11 "Staff Conversations" across the main campus, East Hill Plaza, Seneca Place and Geneva to hear from staff. Each one-hour session focused on four core questions:

- What helps or hinders your sense of connectedness on campus?
- What systems or processes are currently in place to help you feel connected to Cornell?
- What have you done or might you do to create a sense of connected community at Cornell?
- What advice or recommendations do you have for HR / EA?

Purpose and Context:

Sessions were designed to be informal and encourage participants to share their insights and experiences of belonging as the university works to enhance the workplace climate for Cornell staff. We – the HR division and EA – were interested in understanding where HR and EA efforts are having an impact and where we need to improve.

Outcome:

Approximately 250 staff – exempt, non-exempt, individual contributors, supervisors and union employees – participated in the 11 sessions. The feedback was wide-ranging and informative. Following the sessions, members of the EA and HR analytics worked together to discuss how to thematically categorize staff members' comments. In total, 54 pages of notes were collected. Using emerging themes, the EA will partner with Cornell units in evaluating and develop actions and outcomes to address and improve Cornell's staff environment.

In many cases, comments or ideas mentioned by staff are currently in place or have the attention of senior leadership. This overlap leads us to believe that one outcome should be for HR and the EA, as well as other Cornell offices, to strive to more effectively communicate across the university. There were also several unique and potentially "game changing" ideas that, if properly shepherded through the appropriate units and organizations, could lead to immediate action on behalf of the staff community.

Over the next few pages, our summary intends to introduce the identified themes, highlight some of the direct comments and, finally, discuss what recommendations will be forwarded to the appropriate university organization for assessment of implementation. Lastly, all of the raw information – to include every comment recorded – is shared in the attached appendices.

Thematic Categories:

1. Improving Connectedness and Community
2. Communication and Messaging – Enhancing our tools
3. Access to University Programs and Activities (particularly for non-exempt staff, those with non-traditional work hours and distant proximity to central campus)
4. Workload
5. Supervisor / Employee Relationships (including faculty supervisors)
6. Opportunities for Development and Career Growth
7. Transportation
8. Oversight

The feedback from the staff community was incredibly helpful to our understanding of effective staff programming areas for improvement. Overwhelmingly, staff are pleased with university training offerings and professional development opportunities. Additionally, there were numerous favorable comments about staff members volunteering in university-sponsored events such as Slope Day and Commencement. Despite these positive comments, it became clear that we should continue to identify more effective communication tools and methods to enhance staff awareness of these opportunities. Perceptions of "connectedness" at Cornell are often driven by staff awareness. Time and again, we heard and acknowledge the university's over-reliance on email. We also recognize the important balance between posters or fliers with a view toward minimizing waste and being stewards of the environment. The Division of University Relations is currently working to identify communication challenges and assess best practices with the goal of enhancing communications to internal audiences.

Cornell University's geographic size and a staff community of over 8,200 present unique challenges as well as opportunities to enhance "connectedness and community" for our employees. Highlighting best practices and sharing new ideas allow us to mitigate some of our barriers to connectedness. Central HR and the EA recognize and acknowledge the need for a more robust onboarding for new staff. In the coming months the "Big Red Welcome" will be introduced and will provide a much more comprehensive introduction to Cornell and the EA will partner with HR in this effort (see appendix A). The University wants new staff to feel that they are joining a team that will support the new staff in making the professional transition to Cornell's workforce. During the conversations a staff member shared a "best practice" that also addresses this issue. One college has instituted an Ambassador Program to welcome new staff members and facilitate the exploration of Cornell events and staff programs. The ambassador assists the new employee in understanding unit practices as well as navigating some of the complexities and nuances of Cornell.

One of our core questions during the Staff Conversations was, "what hinders your sense of connectedness at Cornell?" We received a wide range of responses. Many staff members indicated the high cost of living in Ithaca and longer commutes limited their ability to participate in campus events. Over 30% of staff and over 40% of union employees live outside of Tompkins County (See Appendix C). This presents a real challenge for those traveling longer distances to access after-hour's programs. University administrators are keenly aware of this and are taking pro-active steps to consider potential housing solutions for employees who would like to live closer to Cornell.

"One of the biggest hindrances in getting to campus is planning in one-hour-plus travel time and if the bus decides to run. "

In August of 2017, *Market Watch* identified Ithaca as the seventh most expensive place to raise a family in the U.S. Just this past month, a team of managers from across campus took on a project to better understand the current challenges faced by staff who wish to live closer but face financial burdens when attempting to do so. This issue affects our ability to professionally and personally connect to Cornell and the community. It also impacts recruitment, retention and quality of life for our staff.

Other frequently raised comments addressed supervisor and staff relations, and the perceived inequality of the implementation / access to campus programming during working hours.

"There is a need for supervisors to be proactive to raise awareness and promote these new outlets. It takes a while for a low level and new employee to know it's OK to join in activities and take advantage of the opportunities."

The decentralized nature of the university structures are partly responsible for this perception, but at the same time, colleges and units should have the freedom to implement policies and procedures that best support their business practices. Another aspect that leads to inequality is the range of supervisor interpretation and implementation of policy for staff. These comments have also come from the University Managers Working Group – which has EA membership participation. This group was created by the College Officers in an effort to enhance collaboration and communication across campus in order to share best practices as well as reduce the perceived differences between units. Additionally, this past December, Vice President Opperman and her team of central HR leadership hosted the first HR Managers Forum. This forum was created to increase supervisor education of university initiatives. Following the very positive feedback from this first meeting, Vice President Opperman will be offering this forum to all university staff in February.

Staff also discussed the importance of maintaining workload balance. It has been observed that as new initiatives increase, existing work remains the same, leading some to question if staff should assess opportunities to delegate, streamline or restructure their existing responsibilities. Partnering with HR's Work/Life Balance Team, the EA will continue to explore potential solutions and opportunities for improvement. Time in the workday remains the same, but there is an impression that the amount of work is steadily increasing.

"People use what resources they have to do the most with less. And we've been doing this for years. People have reached the point of exhaustion. It feels like the staff is doing the heavy lifting. There has been a limiting of resources, and the amount of work has stayed consistent. So it feels like the staff is being asked to do more with less."

Units, managers and staff should continuously assess the value of work and types of work. Doing things "because that's the way we have always done it," leads to stagnation and often affects staff morale. During President Martha Pollack's fall 2017 Address to Staff, she promoted innovation and asked staff to "[take risks.](#)" Innovation comes from responsible risk-taking.

The last element of the Staff Conversations summary is a call to the university's senior leadership to continue what you do by making staff relationships personal. During each of our engagements with staff, it was clear how much they appreciated connections with our leadership. Comments ranged from the gratitude of central HR's outreach during the Staff Conversations to examples of "Coffee with the Dean," and employee celebrations. It is clear from the feedback we received that Cornell's leadership cares about its employees and strives to identify and improve the climate for our workforce – keep up the great work!

The Employee Assembly and central HR are committed to identifying collaborations and partnerships across the university to continually assess staff connectedness and, more importantly, identify areas we can improve. This past semester's Staff Discussions gave us a tremendous amount of information and we will do our best to continue the open dialogue with staff and turn staff ideas into action.

The Employee Assembly

APPENDIX A - EA RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication/Messaging
- Use of Workday announcements - A series of searchable articles on all employee-specific activities, available programs and relevant deadlines which may be announced on the Workday welcome page under News & Updates. All relevant/timely articles will continue to be available for lookup afterwards from the Workday logon screen

- Workday App - Replicating an experience rather than just relaying information; options for remote log on and online participation in training and staff development opportunities

- Targeted emails rather than long announcements

- Virtual real time access to campus and remote events - to bridge the distance   and hardship of attending events and meetings far away from the workplace, use technology to allow participants to attend these events remotely

- AA&D conducts "virtual outreach" sessions with WebX – this should be further investigated.

- Replicating an experience rather than just relaying information; options for remote log on and online participation in training and staff development opportunities

- Using Cornell Cast more robustly

- Cornell Events Central Calendar with "tagging" capability, allowing users to identify campus stakeholders

Onboarding
- EA receives notification on new hires and partners with HR in to assist welcoming staff and maintaining lasting connections. The on-boarding team is thinking about having weekly/every other week meetings. EA people can join and make connections at this entry point. EA could be the serve as mentors or ambassadors each rep reach out to their constituent new hires

- Add a start date to Workday fields in order to determine who is new every six months and facilitate outreach

- "Cool Jewels of Cornell Campus" monthly snap shot – Each month we will highlight unique aspects of Cornell's campus to both educate and encourage staff to learn more about our amazing university.

Supervisor / Staff Relations

- EA to spotlight staff actions and engagement across campus – Staff Spotlight

APPENDIX B – STAFF COMMENTS

Categories by # of Comments
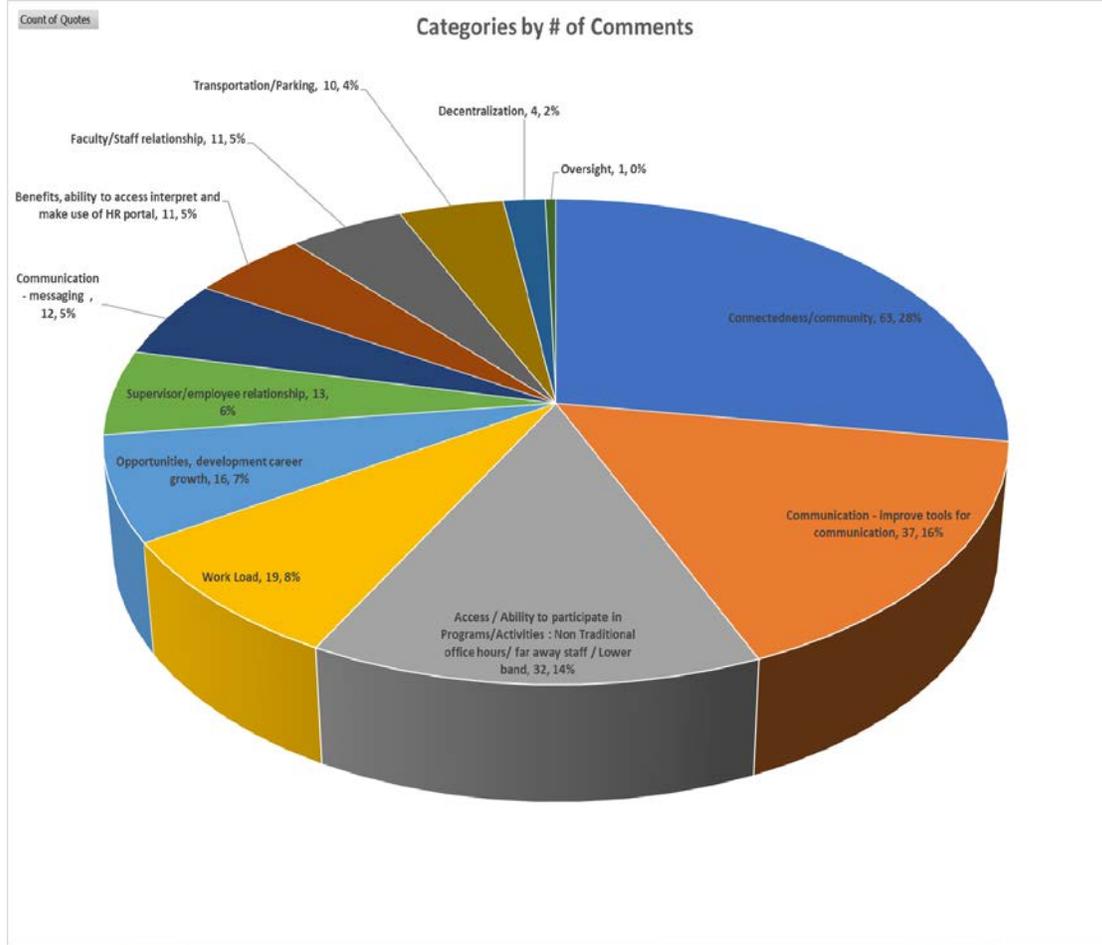
Row Labels	Count of Quotes
Connectedness/community	63
Communication - improve tools for communication	37
Access / Ability to participate in Programs/Activities : Non Traditional office hours/ far away staff / Lower band	32
Work Load	19
Opportunities, development career growth	16
Supervisor/employee relationship	13
Communication - messaging	12
Benefits, ability to access interpret and make use of HR portal	11
Faculty/Staff relationship	11
Transportation/Parking	10
Decentralization	4
Oversight	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	**229**

1. Improving Connectedness / Community – Staff Quotes

There seems to be a distinct separation between workers and HR departments. HR used to be more integrated to with the staff; is there a possibility for HR to shadow at some departments?

Great to check in with new employees after a while to see how things are going and what is new and what's going on in the employee's life.

3-year employee and previously from out of state managing team and trying to figure out university. Hindering connectedness, still trying to feel connected. Without having kids it doesn't seem like there are network opportunities. I have a Millennial employee who doesn't feel connected and doesn't have friends here. They've tried to meet people and not had much success. Is there a tech solution? Or yammer? The HR website is wonderful, but a supervisor newsletter might be helpful - in a proactive push way. Outside the workday transition the only news my employee and I really get is Pawprint. With a busy job it is hard to get ahead and suggest opportunities for people. Seems like a time and schedule issue. Also, job descriptions – employees need to know where they fit. There is an employee who has been here for 15 years and this was the first time her job description was updated. Supervisors are perpetuating the unknown.

All the HR improvements help those during the day and that is a problems for us. In the daytime shift I could get food, snacks. However, just recently they provided vending machines which allowed workers to get snacks and food at night. It used to be that they had different resources at night, but they took away the space after the recent renovation. So it feels like improvements for the college may not be helpful for individuals during night shifts.

Thank you for coming out here. This helps with connectedness. The more things we can get involved with helps. There are many resources not available at night. Just the availability for a cup of coffee. I know that is minuscule but it makes a difference.

There should be more team building activities across units.

As a manager, I would like to take the whole team out of the work space. But, there is always something to do, there is always an emergency. It doesn't have to be a BBQ in the summer, but I would like opportunities.

It would be nice to get staff together. Staff meetings are impossible. I've been trying for years to get everyone together, just for a staff meeting. And it is very difficult.

Community building where you can get it is great (now in her new job as a manager.) It's not as easy as for an admin assistant. I like community building. Currently I have an employee dealing with a mental health issue. Part of the problem is dealing with the staff member who is still in the workplace but also struggling. If there were some kind of training about how to help/support a person and give strategies, that would be great.

I want to improve morale, and create events. But there isn't a space for that and we might get disrupted. In the past couple of years it has gotten better. Recognizing staff during staff appreciation events is so important. The college has done better over the years. Providing pie and ice cream which has helped. However, we don't really have a place for it. The cafeteria isn't open during our shifts.

I used to do yoga in a classroom; it would be nice to have a room dedicated for breaks. Self-wellness is huge - but we don't have that many options. We don't have options that would help us pay for gym or chiropractor services.

If complex info/decisions are reduced to a checkbox, throw it out [the value is lost]. The team I am works really well. I did networking un-officially/informally and have contact in multiple places. Giving teams the freedom to self-assemble and do their thing is valuable.

We do have new employee orientation; they are disastrous for us because by the time they attend, it is after their night shift. We expect them to go to this from 9-noon but then that means having to change their entire schedule around. They don't change their schedule around for their health. We should look at that as a whole; being able to attend orientations because you learn a lot.

It should also be stated that it would be benefit elections can be revisited. 'Oh you're a new employee we will throw the information at you.' I don't remember what I've chosen. I don't know what that means. It would be nice to have that revisited, have someone explain that.

Employee service award recognition is great but infrequent in some places (like only at 20 or 25 years). Would be better to be more frequent.

Small things like passing around a thank you bucket of candy is a nice gesture.

Is there an onboarding system for extension employees?

Same cast of characters always helping out, stepping up. What are ways to be more engaged with local community?

There is a sense that you are devalued as an overnight worker.

In the animal care unit we are treated different. We don't want to be treated different. This is one of the things that makes us feel disconnected. One of the important things for us is we will have schedule change but if we don't work regular shift, if there is a holiday on Thursday or Friday I am told I cannot volunteer to work. But this is the first year we will see a problem with it. It will be the same people working and they will get resentful. This first holiday will be a true test. There are not enough people at either ends of the week to cover 24 hours. So only 3 people that work Saturday will be asked to work it again and again.

It would be nice to have regular "unstructured time" to connect. I don't feel too comfortable in moving around to other work areas where I might be disrupting the work of others, but I would like to be able to make connections that way.

Unfortunately, at Geneva, we don't have an established place for dining.

When looking at the word connected, we are talking about one way communications. I was part of a grassroots movement around online learning across campus with people of a similar interest. We would have a yearly meeting that was 150+ people and leadership would come and speak.

We came up with ideas and topics and brought people together. In addition the community members grew to over 500 staff and faculty across campus. It's a joint effort across multiple schools and units. There is an opportunity to work together and come together to do university work.

Cohort groups – I work in a job role in a college in admission and there are admissions communities across campus.   Collaboration is discouraged with other admissions, central admissions, and all of it.

I Previously worked in Europe and they had common lunch breaks. Feels like we are missing a place for staff to go for lunch. Not everyone has time to cook.   A place for employees' vs faculty and students where they can network. I've initiated a lunch break within our group. The soup bar (in the Statler) is where I take people but it's unknown.

What makes me feel most connected?   Soup and Hope sessions.   All the technology and communication is ok, but having intimate relations with people and hearing stories. There were student speakers, faculty, and employees and there is a lot of connectedness. There is an ASK BIG questions movement. What if there were big questions asked across campus so people could send feedback. Maybe move away from videos/links.

I always volunteer for slope day to meet people across campus and have fun. I work commencement, there is the united way committee; there are ways to get involved. Sharing the opportunities across campus is tough. There are ways to connect but it requires self-motivation and self-selecting to do what is needed.

I am hearing that the (work) climate has changed and will continue to change. The word belonging has changed to the word connectedness which I think is a great change.

On connectedness, some of it is on us and fostering connections with other people.

What helps people feel connected are all the events and many of them are free and open to the public.   Info is shared about what is coming up.   Example - drafts of the Emancipation Proclamation, the history of hip hop. Campus is a historical place, new and old buildings, so much going on.

It would be interesting to get groups together that are doing this stuff - a lot on the grassroots level actions. It would be interesting to do a brain dump on what others are doing. This might generate more ideas and involvement. If it's inclusive and open to everyone is that enough or does everyone have to come.

99% of the time if you show up, you have fun. It's just getting them there.

I don't know who my staff partners are. I come from a small liberal arts unit which had weekly get-togethers. I have no idea who the resources are and where resources come in. I just don't have the sense of structure - despite being here for 7.5 years. And because we are so big, you've got your staff, assistant directors, directors. There are so many layers. For some people it's integral for them to do outreach and for others like myself we stay in the shop. My job is just student oriented, so I don't get the opportunities to do the outreach.

There are so many micro-cultures at Cornell. In terms of what systems or processes are there to help with connectedness, I don't know what the resources are. Some departments get it right and others struggle. I don't know what Cornell is doing as a whole for connectedness.

Three Ideas for creating connectedness between faculty and Staff:
1) Faculty staff and spousal staff can create a bridge
2) Create cross campus working groups (this works at higher bands)
3) Nature RX Community. (They prescribe nature to students. Expand this to staff as an engagement tool).

We work with our peers from across campus. Even in our office I find when I am able to talk to someone else, I find we are doing the same work. So people are doing work twice. All of this happens because we are not communicating with each other. But we can find efficiencies if we are aware of the work happening across campus.

Having meetings like this signals the importance of connectedness. But, many lower level staff don't participate in these types of meetings. Do other non-supervisory staff feel invited or welcome? It seems that through the layers, the trickle down doesn't always make it to front line staff.

One thing that I've experienced is there is some kind of territorialism about the buildings or what people do even though we have the same goal. Example: If I try to find a room for an event, some people are helpful but some people are a 'HARD NO' because they think it's only for their department.

How do I develop relationships and trust? Some of the most important conversations I've had so far are in the parking lot. Making real connections with trust can lead to bigger conversations on a daily basis.

I've been here 9 years and never get tired of finding new places on campus and groups - Soup and Hope, fitness classes, Lincoln Hall music at noon series. Its work to keep these activities on your radar. Trying to answer what creates the sense of connected community at Cornell for me: committee work is an area to meet people and have fun.

We have had 3 events inside our division and it gets people out to mingle and not talk about work. Our next one is a scavenger hunt, find 10 things on Cornell you maybe never heard of. The idea is to get teams of 5 or 6 and have people explore the university together.

I love mixing the cultures and science and meeting people but it's outside my job.

When I started working here, I came from Ecuador and lunch was important there for people and here, everyone eats at their desk. You just don't get to know people that way. I don't know how to change it, maybe eat outside. You're at your desk all day!
In my culture we had 2 hour lunch and wine!
Our whole Dept is working for alumni and friends. We need subject matter information from campus and it takes a lot of extra effort.

The #10 bus helps connect downtown to campus.

Volunteering at campus events helps build community.

There used to be a class detailing Cornell History. That would help with a sense of community.

There are many opportunities that help, they need to be better communicated and encouraged for staff. Things like college network groups, diversity meetings, courses, committees. In addition, we need to feel valued for what we bring to the table.

Kudos for a couple things, Hi five group, assemblies, and things you are doing to interact. Benefair-single date to mark on calendar and get good workshops, can plan for that. Workday is heading in the right direction, for mentoring, showing who else has skills to connect to.

The university has done a great job. We recently had a workshop lately teaching about trans experience. I would like to do even more to open up my perspective. I was born into a culture that raised me a certain way. It has built my entire world view, there are things I am not aware of for example digging down into white and male privilege and it may be painful, but is important to look into.

I grew up here, went to Cornell. Over time there is a disconnection between Ithaca, the suburbs, Cayuga Heights, Ithaca College, different insular communities. Many employees are from greater central NY area and commute in. How about the broader community and all the stories they need to tell about connections. Also, families over generations working at Cornell and feeling disconnected from the university.

From my perspective, people are welcome here and the university has their back. How do you bring it into the day to day work space?

Feeling disconnected - we used to have faculty / staff bus tours, it was a great way to orient staff. Lots of units do it for themselves.   I recommend we do these again.

This get together has been great. It was very meaningful to have access to a VP who is not our own. This helps staff feel connected to the larger university.

One Cornell is very powerful, what is being done to promote this idea?
Thank you again. Central HR takes a role in making me feel connected. President Pollack's messages on the swastikas helped and made me feel more connected. However, there seems to be better help for students than for staff.

Where does a transgender person go in times of stress, when experiencing PTSD, if FSAP hasn't helped them?

"I came from the University of the Arts (UARTS) in Pennsylvania before joining Cornell. It is a small visual and performing arts college in Center City, Philadelphia. The student body was only 1200 students. They had a mentor program for all new employees, whereby new staff were assigned a mentor, from outside their immediate unit, to help them get acclimated to UARTS. The mentor took the new employee to lunch and showed them around campus. Then each

month the HR department would hold a lunch for all the new employees, so they could also get to know one another. Here at Cornell I could imagine this including taking a campus tour.

I found this very rewarding not only when I first joined UARTS but also later when I volunteered to be a mentor. It gave me an opportunity to network across units and to share my knowledge of an institution I really loved. Over the first year of having a new mentee, I would call them or go see them occasionally to see how they were doing. Because the place was small I would often just naturally run into them around campus or at annual events.

There is some work in developing a program like this because you would need a list of possible mentors and funding to allow for the lunches. But I thought I would share the idea anyway. I would be willing to be a mentor if you ever got a program like this started. Depending on the timing and scope I might also be able to serve on a committee to get something like this up and running."

Affinity groups: How might we create opportunities for people to find and create groups based on affinity? I just spent some time on the HR website to find this page I had no idea existed, so it's possible most staff don't know either: https://hr.cornell.edu/professional-development/career-management/network-mentor - I presume this page is marketed to new hires (not when I started Jan 2016) but how is it marketed to current staff? Also the page isn't really adept at explaining how one would start a new E-list or CNG or encourage that sort of thinking. And how could we reward that sort of thinking? Also relevant, I see there's some sort of mentor program, I never heard of that either until I just saw it. (Another good reason for a supervisor newsletter.)

A review of Yammer's effectiveness in creating connectedness, and whether there are only certain segments of the staff population who use it and for narrow reasons. I'm not sure who manages that platform but it's not effective as you can see by how many people see and comment on posts (not many)... I feel like technologies could be explored that might be friendlier. But I feel like that is what people point to for creating connectedness at Cornell but it's a little daunting to expect a new hire to post questions about "what doctors do you like?" into a void like that. I never would have. I also didn't hear about it until long after I started.

I think the results of the above paragraph would lead to possible new gaps to fill in how new hires are able to plug in. I'm starting a tour of CALS for new to give them a sense of place in our college but after that they are on their own.

2. Communication and Messaging / Enhancing our Tools – Staff Quotes

It would be great if there was something on the web for people of like interest or similar skills to find each other to build virtual communities across the colleges.

Send communications with Outlook invites.

Too many sources of info (newsletters) and its either all or nothing sometimes. Suggestion is to highlight what is really important vs less information.

There is a need for supervisors to be proactive to raise awareness and promote these new university programming. It takes a while for a low level and new employees to know it's OK to join in activities and take advantage of the opportunities.

Benefits. Lot of info on the internet about Cornell benefits and it would be great if all staff members knew where to go and look for them. Doing some research on our own and then bringing it to the supervisors is better than just the supervisor bringing it to the employees.

Thinking about the dynamics of the way we communicate now – there are lots of listservs, lots of information; the ways that we're communicating now are making it more difficult to hold on to the information. It's not that we're not sharing info – we're sharing a lot. But what is our capacity to take it in? How do I stay on top of it all while doing my job?

I attended the workshop, 'The Daring Way for Leadership' – it was great. I recommend more opportunities like that. I also serves as a crisis counselor. Let staff know what opportunities are available to staff to connect across campus. Encourage Volunteerism.

Advertising is important because we are feel secluded at our office. We get inundated with emails; so we get email fatigue. But a lot of people do not read their emails. I can forward email to staff but that doesn't mean they will read it. Just like this opportunity to share our thoughts on connectedness - there was a sign for months and people still did not know what it was.

I asked people from the Wellness center to do a demonstration and it was wonderful. So there are things - but I just don't know if my staff knows how to use the resources we have. There are staff that use faculty staff assistant program. Some people are hesitant and some people just don't know. They are just inundated with so much information. It can't just be on us but people need to take responsibility for their own well-being as well.

Reminder text messages as a way to communicate messages to individuals of events. Onboarding should be more than 1 day. Learning everything in 1 day is crazy. We don't train people as properly as we should.

The Cornell Sun speaks to things that affect our work but not outside the university.   It is helpful to know what is going on outside. The Sun is a first step. For example, I found out from the sun they were moving away from Blackboard to Canvas and she works with Blackboard very regularly and had not heard about that change. Wasn't sure if it was true or not!   The Sun gives context to follow up with it. Seems to do a better job than the newsletter ones.

The Cornell Sun seems like independent news vs the company newsletter.

I started at Cornell working HR office of Pawprint.   In HR world Pawprint is a vehicle, outside of HR not much traction. Is there a way to opt people in first vs have to subscribe?

IT newsletter, engineering, Pawprint, chronicle, receiving like 6 things a week to read. Lots coming in and hard to manage what to read even if it has interesting stuff. Things fall quickly off the radar.

As much email we get - we get a lot. Every time we get a newsletter I recommend engaging headlines in the emails so people can easily scan and decide if they want to check into it. It would be my vote on the staff level to do better here.

I would prefer a paper version of newsletter information. I find that if something is in the mail room I will pick it up and grab it. When it's in email, it loses its value compared to same content printed.

The Cornell Sun has a broad overview and somewhat independent content. Pawprint seems HR driven publication, sort of gives only HR perspective. Not a lot of room for other perspectives. Feels like the Sun is a better-rounded source of info.

Paper vs. email, reading a paper version feels less like work and nice way to get info. Sustainability wise probably not great. Happy there is the Sun around campus to pick up. Have some materials around campus in dedicated spots maybe?

Computer science is using SLACK for dialogue. For master's program using slack, they have students talking about the university and Ithaca.

One way to improve things is for Cornell Cast to be used with recorded media. There is a lot that could be done with this but isn't yet.

Working with teams from various college/units helps my connectedness. Remote meetings are nice for efficiency but physically getting people together is beneficial in making connections.

Just being aware of opportunities across campus is great. I didn't know about the 'Staff Conversations' until I transitioned to a role in HR. Perhaps some other communication methods would be helpful.

Can we have an update on the East Hill community?

I am in an office that doesn't change. What are some strategies we can use when we need change? We aren't aware of all of the resources or how to implement.

It is hard to connect to other groups. Our area doesn't have a diversity officer, since we don't have students or faculty.

When folks are doing inclusive work across campus, it is hard to know who to talk to. It is difficult to have a network and exchange information across efforts.

Workday is heading in the right direction, for mentoring, showing who else has skills to connect to.

Poor communication hinders my connectedness. People are using different and disjointed technologies. They are only collaborative by necessity.

In building a community, there needs to be a shared goal. My recommendation is to think in terms of establishing service excellence, not only in how we serve each other, but how we serve

our constituents. A small example - answer calls or emails in certain amount of time. Right now other than having Cornell as my beacon, I can't put my finger on what differentiates us from others.

It would help if there are a ways to filter up what we are doing and good ideas. My unit does things on diversity intentionally. I would like to see a way to filter things up.

3. Access to University Programs and Activities (non-exempt staff, those with non-traditional work hours and proximity to central campus) – Staff Quotes

Community building where you can get it is great now that I am a manager. It's not too easy as an admin assistant.

I have that problem with staff. If there is a staff event if there is a weekend event and I need to take time off I have to take 2 days off or I won't be sleeping. I am good at functioning with little sleep but not everyone can do that and we expect them to work one of those nights get off work at 1AM and then do something and sleep that night. It is difficult to register that. We can't expect them to work all night do something then the next night work again.

Resources for the 24/7 units would be helpful. Pros and Cons of different scheduling models. Understand what resources are available shift to shift. I think there is benefit to have someone at that level who understands to provide guidance. I think that would be helpful.

Is there a way to bring campus events to the external units instead of central campus specific?

From the prospective of the 24 hour services here there is a feeling of separation from Cornell at the Hospital. Holidays are working and paid M-F but not weekends. Every 5 years they have to fight to get employees compensated; this causes animosity towards the university.

Impacting staff by inequitable or unequal access around benefits/access to benefits. Example of employee degree program is not accessible at some units because job roles or supervisors.

Working in a group with a lot of turnover, they changed the way we talk to 'Retain' first. I usually hear 'Recruit' first. For people who have been here for 18/19 years, what about them? I know we are doing some things as a community but...

There is nowhere for quiet. Even if you try to use a break room, people still come in. It is difficult to get space to get a break.

In sense of turnover, benefits can be tough because hourly employees require 2 years for long term benefits and making long term decisions to stick with Cornell. Young people want growth and opportunities and stability. Having access to some benefits earlier would be better/sustainable.

I came from multiple positions before moving to an academic unit. Transition was hard. One thing that hinders me and my staff from being connected is the way we manage our time. Hourly and salary employees. Not consistent. Because of workday, there is some feeling of 'I

get paid for my time and not for the 'me''. For example: I wanted to go to Soup and hope but staff can't go because they only get 42 minutes and they don't' want to leave half way through. Some people have the time and others don't so we have to say no across the board.

We do have a Benefair at the Vet School even during the day even when there are more patients. So the entire Benefits office comes here. It happens December 5th this year because I want our staff to be able to break away. I want to think of creative ways to allow others to participate.

I support a community soup kitchen, but non-exempt employees can't assist because they have to take vacation time.

Cornell Wellness used to come up here…can we restart that? Supervisors need to tell us it's o.k. to do additional or extracurricular training/activities.

The Soup and Hope program is great and the nature of that program is worth revisiting and taking it to a larger level. Maybe a message from higher ups to supervisors to allow staff to go once a month from this time. From the president - so the authority is there.

Employee Assembly - I want to go to more, but I am very busy. Is it possible to zoom in?

Is there a better way to increase the Cornell presence for people who work downtown or folks who live off campus?

Not being on campus hinders connectedness.

I like the opportunity to help with new student orientation, in my regular job I don't interact with students/faculty and participating in that type of activity is helpful.

I like volunteering for slope Day. Students are grateful.
Commencement is a great place to volunteer and you get to know people, interact with students and parents are really thankful, if you can point them in the right direction they are so thankful, a really fun day.

When I think about my sense of belonging and the volume of stuff going, I'm into meditation and I lead that once a week. A lot of autonomy and encouragement in HRIS to participate in other stuff happening in the Cornell community. One factor is that lots of stuff is made available but there are varying cultures/expectations on what people can do. Many of us bring kids for bring a kid to work day and in other areas we hear that it isn't ok to bring my kid or support for the program from my supervisor to do it. I think from the top down you can make these cool things but if there isn't buy-in support it foils it.

There are also issues across hourly or salary. I can take more advantage as a salary person because I can say, do 2 hours of work at night and a hourly person doesn't have that same advantage. We have to consider time tracking about paid vs. unpaid time. Hourly employees should be paid when they are doing participating in take your kid to work day. Managers need to be better informed that this is paid time.

It would be really nice to have a wellness/exercise facility over here. Going to campus adds an hour onto your time. The space here in EHP is open to talking with Cornell.

One thing our office does for connecting - once a month we have excursions, clock tower, orchards, and synchrotron.

Multiple people report that working from Thornwood and Downtown feels less connected with campus.

4. Workload – Staff Quotes

Hospital is sort of connected to the Vet school. Not much time to be connected to the Cornell community at the Animal Hospital. Other employees would have to carry the load. Many people can't attend because they are working. Are there more events possible where someone can stop by in shorter increments in their local areas?

I think from our unit having some kind of implementation of training other staff from the rest of the hospital to come in and run the ICU if needed. We were talking about connections, really the only people I hang out with are my work family. The stress from our low staff, high case load puts a strain on our work family. It is tense. It is difficult especially in our unit.

Saturday was a hectic day. I saw a student cramming food into her mouth standing up because she could not find the time to properly digest. A lot of time that is how it feels that you are just trying to cram a lot into a small amount of time.

Short staffing is an issue.

Our unit is without a section supervisor so we are in a weird state.

Our unit is the same. We've lost people we've hired people but it is still difficult
Things that hinder connectedness – work load. My job is deadline driven and makes it very difficult to socialize. Example, in facilities (and other areas) they feel understaffed and it seems like the employees are doing everything they can just to keep up with the work. The workload also impacts the ability to work on new projects or initiatives. The ongoing lists of emails is a big challenge. Some folks won't attend training because they feel like they will get behind on the job. It feels corporate because we put the nose to the grind stone and don't leave until the job is done.

We try, I am a team leader in the ICU. But there are nights which are very hectic. And there are nights where you cannot take breaks. Even if you take 15 minutes to eat, or eat in the kitchen, we try for that. But we could be dealing with a patient who needs CPR. There are high stress cases, you are on edge all the time. That is something to come down from. Even if there is time, there is no break room. This is a 24 hour unit but we don't have a break room. We are told to go to the atrium but that is far.

The EHP buildings are old and we struggle to get updates (i.e new windows in Payroll). Little stuff getting Band-Aids.

I just did a huge complete deep dive into our policies and that is part of my job but sometimes it's left up to interpretation. If it takes us so long to interpret, what about those out there who don't ever look at policy, know where the policy is and why they matter.

Policy issue (i.e. let employees go home early day before holiday - should use time but not everyone does that)

People use what resources they have to do the most with less. And we've been doing this for years.

People have reached the source of exhaustion.   It feels like the staff is doing the heavy lifting. There has been a limiting of resources, and the amount of work has stayed consistent. So it feels like the staff is being asked to do more with less.
I barely have time for the work. There are workflow issues. I barely have time to connect with colleagues in this building.

The work that we do here is unique. But my experience is if I know of the opportunity I will try to go. But that doesn't change the amount of work I have to do. This doesn't change the balancing act I have to do. I have to take on the same amount of students and work. To me I'd have to prioritize. Nature Rx would have to wait.

There is too much work to allow for relationship building time as part of work, it is done on the fly. How can we bring others along to build relationships and self-develop while maintaining the work?

There is a contingent of middle age staff who have been here a long time, provide institutional memory and have only gotten 2% raises, less than inflation, for a long time, they haven't felt valued and should be invested in.

We should find opportunities to streamline processes that take lots of effort for very little usage.

5. Supervisor / Employee Relationships (Including Faculty Supervisors) - Quotes

There is a need for supervisors to be proactive to raise awareness and promote these new outlets. It takes a while for a low level and new employee to know it's OK to join in activities and take advantage of the opportunities.

Who has the role for advancing an individual through the process? Let's come back to equity. Because the different people and capacities to advocate for themselves. What happens to them outside Cornell and what is available to them. There are committees saying advocate for yourself and if you can't that is your problem... I don't see how that is a good way, it is an inequitable way. Supervisors have a lot of responsibility to advocate for staff members where they can't advocate for themselves even if the staff does have the knowledge.

Staff members having difficulty with a supervisor and vice-versa. Working in a department that has a give and take and good team work is the best. Is there any kind of mechanisms to give

workgroups coaching on how to work together better from both sides? Usually leads to communication problems.

Some of this comes to communication between supervisors and staff members. I agree there are different types of people you supervise (and I am a supervisor). Have an honest conversation with the person and look at them as they are. Some staff who are retiring and want to stick in the job. Young staff that this is a stepping stone for them. Those staff need to be shown the opportunities and budget for them and encourage it. Other thing she does to create connectivity-ness – be on committees outside your unit. Empathy for other departments and people at Cornell and suddenly you see how good you really have it vs. other people. Putting yourself in others shoes you gain knowledge and that is how you start understanding the ONE Cornell. Unit has to do well, department has to do well, but we have to look out for each other and do that part! SUP need to allow staff to do this. Her SUP does and she does for her staff.

Because we work at night there is a disconnect with faculty. There is more finger pointing. Moving the shift one day a week to alternate one person allows individuals to build that connectedness. It helps to alleviant the tension.

I have had connectedness on my mind – love the idea behind experiential development opportunities. My manager won't allow me to do it so how can that be worked around? I would like to take part in these opportunities.

Having a boss that encourage you to come, take a break, is huge to help feel ok to take time to connect and look for immediate support.

What interferes the most with staff connectedness is the division between faculty and staff. I think there really is a divide. They don't see the staff as partners. The faculty sees themselves up here and staff down here. Even Martha Pollack said in her address to staff that staff are in support of faculty. Just the way it is framed, the staff are put in this box.

When I started here, my supervisor sent out a welcome email telling people to stop by and only 1 person stopped by.

6. Opportunities for Development and Career Growth – Staff Quotes

There are now more supervisors trying to help maneuver employee careers. It works when Cornell is thought of as a community and one place instead of unit vs unit. Having people who have been here longer and coach/mentor new employees and answer how did they get where they got to provide examples for students. Turning Point was a big benefit to feel not alone and give a better sense of community.

Had no resource as an employee to hold a faculty member accountable. Had faculty member say to her, "do you believe I have a PhD and I have to carry a box across the campus?" The level of entitlement is unacceptable.

There is a sense there are different rules for tenured faculty members and there is no ramifications for the faculty and bad behavior. The challenge is how to create different roles

where one role doesn't feel superior even if different. How do we make visible and put a spotlight on a really inclusive environment. It's profound when good situations take place, we mostly hear about the bad.

How do we get people to show up to events? One big obstacle is supervisor permission. Need supervisors to have an ability to say YES to requests for connectedness.

Noticed inconsistent use about personal days and it's up to the supervisor how they are used. There is sort of an in-between. There should be a set of common expectation for the use of personal days. It does come down to the supervisor. It would be better to have more consistency so it's not up to the supervisor directly.

I want to connect with international staff. People from many countries cannot see their family more than once a year because limited vacation. What is the personal day for?
Reward supervisors for allowing staff to participate in activities on campus. Positive affirmation for pushing staff.

Have the boss encourage you to come, take a break, having a boss encourage it is huge to help feel ok to take time to connect, the immediate support.

7. Transportation – Staff Quotes

Transportation – parking qualification – those of us that have to come to Cornell's campus 2 out of 5 days a week do not qualify for a parking permit. I have to pay for the daily parking pass and this actually cost more than a half time parking permit. I am at the main campus on University business as a Cornell employee, but I can't get a pass.

Parking is a problem for those not near the bus system.

For commuters – it would be great if the bus options made more sense. I have a hard time with my commute.

One of the biggest hindrances in getting to campus is planning the 1 hour + travel time and if the bus decides to run.

At one time they kicked around the idea to closing traffic to campus.

2 years ago they got bikes on campus and had a pilot program I thought that was cool and they should put some at EH and we didn't get a good response to that.

8. Oversight – Staff Quote

 There may be a lack of accountability.

APPENDIX C - FY18 ACCLIMATION SURVEY RESULTS

Did you have to relocate from another location to work at Cornell?

Survey Option	% of Total	Responses
Yes	43.90%	151
No	56.10%	193
Total	100%	344

Are you renting or purchasing/purchased a home?

Response	%	Total
Renting	62.91%	95
Purchased a home	12.58%	19
Renting now with plans to eventually purchase a home	19.87%	30
Other (please indicate)	4.64%	7
Total	100%	151

Some Comments:
The market for housing is outrageous. The pricing is as if we'd live in a large city or metropolitan area. While I did do the research, the rentals are also not updated and Cornell does not provide a list of potential options. I do appreciate the transportation/TCAT that takes you from downtown to campus. I believe the largest challenge in moving is finding a group of people I can relate to outside of Cornell. The area is small and as a member of a marginalized community, I do not find the food or market to buy the food I would like to make. The flights out of the Ithaca airport are extremely expensive and it's inconvenient to travel to Syracuse or Rochester to fly out and visit family or family to visit me. My family is across the Responsesry and a road trip is week's commitment just to travel.

The Ithaca area is far more expensive to live in compared to where I moved from. We are looking for less expensive apartment to rent or home to purchase that is outside of Ithaca for the future.

The housing market is very expensive and offers subpar and outdated amenities. I wish there were more affordable and updated rentals or homes in the area. Additionally, as a person of color, it is difficult to find community or services that cater to people of color, particularly Latinx or African American communities.

The housing market (both buying and renting) was much more than I expected (currently paying triple for my mortgage) - perhaps more so than any other factor of how long I stay at Cornell is if I can keep up with the cost of living for my family. Another huge challenge was I began the position one month before we could close on a house and finding temporary housing was very difficult. I was hoping the University might have some temporary housing options but it was not to be. I wonder if that could be an option, if not University owned/run housing perhaps a list of employees who have rooms willing to rent.

The impact of Ithaca housing on the workforce

Although Cornell is the largest employer in Tompkins County, more than 30 percent of staff and 40 percent of union workers live outside of Ithaca and the county. Inclement weather may pose a challenge for the campus community as 40 percent of Cornell employees have a commute of 20 minutes or more according to IPP/Transportation — with a large portion of these being union employees in service fields.
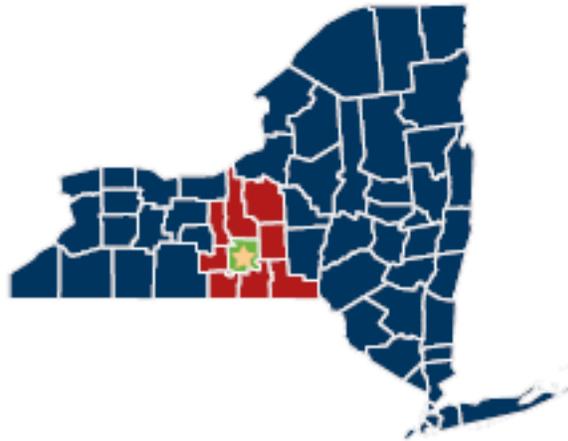
92% of all **faculty** live in Tompkins County, including **95%** minority.

68% of all **staff** live in Tompkins County, including **82%** minority.

EMPLOYEE RESIDENCE

	Ithaca		Tompkins County		Adjacent Counties		Other NY Counties and states	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Faculty	1,360	83%	147	9%	66	4%	66	4%
Academics	658	75%	123	14%	44	5%	53	6%
Staff	2,257	41%	1,487	27%	1,597	29%	165	4%
Union	349	26%	416	31%	577	43%	13	1%

MINORITY RESIDENCE

	Ithaca		Tompkins County		Adjacent Counties		Other NY Counties and states	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Faculty	299	92%	10	3%	7	2%	10	3%
Academics	181	90%	10	5%	6	3%	4	2%
Staff	387	67%	87	15%	81	14%	29	5%
Union	160	68%	45	19%	31	13%	-	-

Source: Workday. This data excludes approximately 5% of employees who have a work location listed outside of Tompkins County, i.e. satellite alumni offices, Cornell Tech.

VI. LIVING AND WORKING IN TOMPKINS COUNTY CONTINUED

Where new staff/union hires came from

10.5% of new hires have moved from an area with a higher cost of living.

ITHACA 109% • • • **33.5%** of new hires are from Ithaca.

NATIONAL AVG

18% of new hires are from Tompkins County.

28% of new hires have moved from an adjacent county.

10% of new hires moved from an area with a lower cost of living.

Cost of living
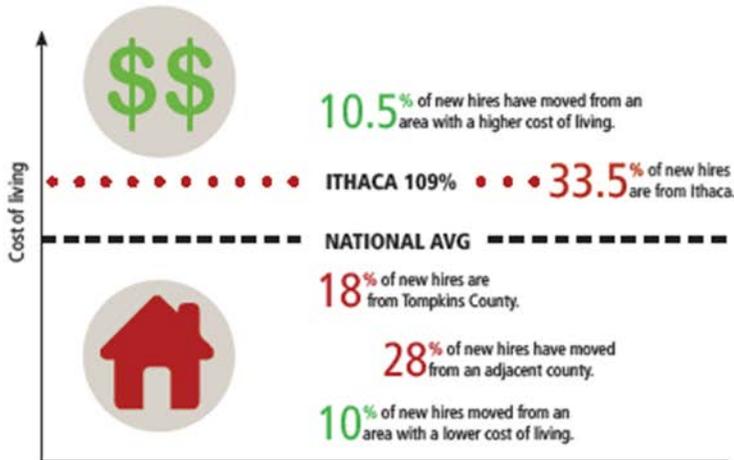
MarketWatch

"It costs a family of four $92,603 to get by (in Ithaca, NY)....due to high taxes and rents, and it may be skewed slightly upward thanks to the costs of child care in New York state"

-The 10 most expensive places to raise a family in the U.S., MarketWatch, April 2017

45% of relocating staff noted challenges with **housing cost and/or availability** in the FY16 Acclimation Survey.

Finding employment can pose a challenge for an accompanying spouse or partner moving to the area.

The university's **dual-career program** works closely with hiring managers and organizations in the community to support these couples.

FY17 Staff Exit Survey:
"Housing is very expensive, and I found it difficult to sustain our life with a single income, and very little chance of ever being a home owner with the current housing market. Expensive childcare and lack of options, though the child care grant was a GREAT benefit and helped our financial situation tremendously."

FY17 Staff Acclimation Survey:
"The cost of housing in the area, as it pertains to rentals, is very expensive for the quality of the rental. It was very difficult to find good housing while relocating from outside the state."