Greetings from Cornell!

Housing is a critical piece of the Cornell experience! Housing options at Cornell are just as diverse as the student body and academic offerings. Freshmen are guaranteed housing on North Campus. We offer housing in traditional dorms, apartments, townhomes, and program houses. Cornell program houses are residential buildings dedicated to the social, cultural, and/or academic interests of our students. Our program houses include:

**Ujamaa** (pronounced “OO-juh-muh”) is dedicated to exposing students to the African Diaspora. This is a dorm open to all people, of all backgrounds, with an open and accepting atmosphere. It is known for the unique beliefs, values, and social views embodied by its community members. Ujamaa and its residents have a focus on supporting the growth and development of students through meetings and in-hall events.

The **Latino Living Center** (LLC) encourages students’ learning about Latino/a culture, history, and current events. Members value the Latino/a heritage including family, community engagement, and commitment to education.

**Akwe:kon** (pronounced uh-GWAY-go) is the nation’s first university residence hall established to celebrate American Indian culture and heritage. The name Akwe:kon means “all of us” in Mohawk language. The building and landscape was designed with symbols that reflect the theme of communal spirit.

I have had the opportunity to live in **Ecology House**, a program house for students interested in protecting our environment. This is also the only campus housing where pets are allowed! This summer, I am serving as a resident advisor to students in **Risley Residential College**, a program house focused on the Creative and Performing Arts.

This is a brief synopsis of only a handful of the program houses here at Cornell. If students are interested in being a program house community member, but do not want to live there, they can apply to be an “out-of-house member.” I have been an out-of-house member at Ujamaa since the start of my freshman year and will live there as a formal member this school year.

Upper-level students have the opportunity to live in **cooperative houses** (co-ops), houses governed by the residents, Collegetown, or on West Campus, where each dorm has its own dining hall. Program houses are also an option for upper-level students.

One-third of Cornell students are involved in **Greek Life**. There are over 60 fraternities and sororities. Many of these organizations have a designated house on Cornell’s campus and offer a residential experience in addition to social, cultural, and/or academic activities.

Cornell’s residential halls are alcohol and drug free spaces. For students recovering from alcohol and/or drug abuse, we offer specific sober housing through our **Sober Housing Initiative**. The initiative and house provide students who self-identify as recovering from addictions with a space to live with others who can relate. The house is located on North Campus.

Cornell has a **gender-inclusive policy** that enables students to live with whomever they choose, regardless of sex, gender, or gender identity. Additionally, students with disabilities or medical conditions have the option to live in **Adaptive Housing**.

An exciting development is Cornell’s **North Campus Residential Expansion** project. This will broaden residential options on North Campus to extend the guaranteed housing period for first-year and sophomore students. It will also contribute to the greater diversity of on-campus living areas. At Cornell, there truly is a housing option for everyone.
When crafting a college list, students should take several factors into account: the probability of admission, the desired area of study, location, school culture, and affordability. All of these facets are imperative to figure out before beginning the application process in order to save both time and money, but when done correctly can help guide students to the school of their dreams! The first step in creating a college list is to encourage your students to use the 3+3+3 guideline in which they choose three certain, three probable, and three reach schools. To determine which schools fit in which category, students should determine how their grades, rigor of completed coursework, standardized test scores, and financial need align with the expectations and requirements of their desired schools. Then, students should begin to decide on a potential area of study. Though some students at this point in their academic careers are certain of a future in the medical field, business, government or other industries, it’s important to posit the possibility of discovering new interests during college. Even students who might be uncertain about what they want to study should approach this decision with a degree of flexibility. This flexible or “growth” mindset is a critical part of a student’s personal development while in the collegiate environment. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills complement this mindset and prepare students to handle potential changes to their career path.

Similarly, students ought to assemble their college list based on their needs and desires. This may seem obvious, but often students feel pressured by parents or classmates to apply to certain schools or programs despite their own wishes. Peer and parental pressure of this type can result in a sort of “Prestige Olympics” in which different types of schools (i.e. Ivy League, HB-CUs, state schools, community colleges) are subjectively ranked by their perceived prestige. This approach not only results in students often focusing their energy on schools that may not be a good fit for them, but also neglects the factors that should hold heavier weight than status in the college search process. In addition to the 3+3+3 guideline, students need to account for their potential success in a small, large, public, or private school. While keeping these vital considerations in mind, here are some additional guidelines for students to help determine if Cornell is right for them.

Why Add Cornell?
Cornell University is an excellent choice “reach” school option for students who would like to attend an Ivy League school that has more of a traditional state university feel. While Cornell is just as rigorous as one would expect of an Ivy, the large, yet cohesive, campus and student body allow for a surprisingly intimate feeling of oneness and pride that one may presume of a traditional state school. Students may also want to add Cornell to their lists as Ezra Cornell’s founding vision of “any person, any study” is veritably at work. Cornell takes a holistic approach when reviewing each application in order to consider students’ potential contributions beyond their academic achievement. Simultaneously, we encourage our diverse student body to follow their academic passions while gaining exposure to a wide breadth of scholarship. If there is not a specific major that piques a student’s interest among the seven colleges and schools, there is not an initial pressure to have it all figured out and there’s an interdisciplinary studies or independent study option for those who want to craft their own program of study. Furthermore, Cornell makes a great addition to college lists as it is rated one of the best value colleges, no doubt partially due to our available financial aid options.

As if the rigorous and diverse programs of study weren’t enough, students should consider Cornell for its truly awesome and unmatched beauty. Ithaca, New York is consistently rated as one of the top college towns in America, which is no surprise considering the wealth of activities that the city provides. Not only does Ithaca have its own gorgeous waterfalls and gorge trails, but it is also located close to several state parks. Throughout all four seasons, Ithaca is uniquely vibrant with opportunities to try new restaurants, participate in a variety of festivals, and volunteer within the community.

Cornell was founded with a mission to educate generations of global citizens through encouraging public service as well as encouraging a “culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community.” Over one hundred and fifty years later, these sentiments are still upheld by Cornellians and are a critical part of what made many of us choose Cornell. If your student seeks a world-class education in an enrichingly diverse environment while maintaining a devotion to community service, Cornell would be an excellent place for them to call home.

News from the Cornell Chronicle
Class of 2022 selected from record number of applicants

“Jason C. Locke, associate vice provost for enrollment, said the newly admitted class also reflects Cornell’s diversity.

Of the admitted first-year students, 33 percent self-identify as underrepresented minority students; 54 percent are students of color, including underrepresented and Asian-American students. Students admitted also include more than 700 first-generation college students.”
Shining Some Light on the College and Major Search

By Richard Onyejiuruwa

Over the last few months I have had the privilege of meeting high school students at fairs and panels in different cities across the country. I have talked with students (and counselors and parents) from different backgrounds who share a desire to pursue the best in higher education. I admire their efforts to visit with me, ask questions about Cornell, and request my advice on college overall. While I have enjoyed meeting these great people, I have grown concerned with the common misconceptions many of them have. It is with this in mind that I leave you with a few tips to help your students better understand why they are applying to college and how to maximize their time and resources in college.

Students can have long-term goals, but their present interests and needs are important guides, too.

In the age of social media, being “in the moment” has never been more precious. I often see students wanting to be doctors and not Biology majors, lawyers and not Government or Industrial Labor Relations majors, veterinarians and not Animal Science majors. Many students challenge themselves with the most rigorous courses and inquire about whether they will receive credit at Cornell. However, they often neglect to ask about how these challenging classes will prepare them for one of the most rigorous higher educations that this world has to offer. Students often lose sight of the opportunity at hand. College, while a stepping stone for future endeavors, is fundamentally a space where learning is done at the highest levels. The objective is to master subjects, not only put them to use in the future. It is also to learn how to learn and solve problems. With this in mind, it is important for students to focus more on college than career. I implore students to ask questions not just about majors, but also about available resources that will meet their needs. No institution can guarantee a career. However, there are many that offer world-class resources (including career development support) and, most importantly, a top education. Exploring whether a school is a strong fit should be a student’s top priority!

Reflecting on where their strongest efforts and passions lie can help students find academic direction.

At college fairs and panels, I have noticed that many students are under the impression that they must choose a major and/or profession that will calm their parents’ unemployment fears and guarantee their financial stability. Others expect students to pursue their so-called “dreams” or “dream job.” In short, many of the students I meet ask questions based on matters they would not face for another five or more years rather than the ones they will encounter in five months to a year. After telling me what interests them, many are not able to respond to me when I ask “Why?” The few who are able to provide a reason are stumped by my follow-up question: “Why does that matter to you?” Two often students mention their interest to pursue their “dreams.” However, as they try to answer the aforementioned questions, some realize their interest actually lies elsewhere.

As they explore their next steps, many students ask me, “Which program should I pick?” While some may advise students to follow their “dreams,” I’ve learned it’s better to “follow [one’s] effort.” I learned this from Shark Tank co-host and billionaire, Mark Cuban. I have found this to be the most beneficial advice when it comes to deciding which academic major to pursue. Fortunately for us, Cornell has 80 majors and over 4,000 courses for students to explore. This allows students to experience an education that caters to their interest(s). With this in mind, I encourage students to take a moment to record all of their efforts throughout their time in high school. What took up most of your time? What were things you actually put effort into? By taking time to reflect on and organize this information, students may realize that they have known what they want to do all along.

When forming their college lists, students need complete information as well as encouragement to aim high.

As counselors we want the best for our students. When students show us their list of colleges they would like to apply to, it is tempting to encourage them to choose schools we believe are best for them according to the common narrative that certain institutions only accept certain students. Often this leads us to fall for the misconceptions that most, if not all, colleges play “a numbers game” that depends purely on G.P.A. and test scores. Cornell admission officers practice holistic admissions in their review of applications. Of course, we want students who strive for their academic best. However, we also want students who are excited to learn and have a deep understanding of the opportunities offered to them here on campus (…and abroad)! It is disheartening to hear of students who, despite being very qualified to apply to highly selective schools like Cornell, chose not to because they were told by someone that they “wouldn’t get in.” If you are tempted to make that comment to a student, I encourage you to have the student reach out to the school directly to learn more about their competitiveness for admission. With a balanced and inquisitive approach to counseling, we can help students achieve their full potential rather than encouraging them to play it safe.

Please allow me to express my immense gratitude for the work that you do. Every day, counselors like you are charged with the task of helping mold students’ futures. As I speak with your students on the road or by phone/email, I cannot help but think that I may be talking to a future Fortune 500 CEO, President of the United States, doctor, teacher, or novelist! Thank you for your hard work and dedication. Please allow me and my Diversity Outreach teammates to join you on this journey. You are welcome to reach out to us at diversity@cornell.edu or 607.255.7233. We are here to help!
No college or university is created equal. With over 80 majors across seven undergraduate colleges, Cornell University is like a small city. Here is a street map of sorts with seven key pointers/reminders to help your students stay on track when navigating the Cornell application process.

1. Students can only apply to one undergraduate college/school at Cornell. Students apply to and enroll in one of the seven undergraduate colleges/schools (a.k.a. their “academic home”). From there, they can pursue minors and take classes “for fun” across the University. It is important for students to keep in mind that a committee within their chosen college/school at Cornell will review their application. These admissions officers will consider whether the student is a great fit for the program they have applied to within Cornell. Students should explore Cornell’s colleges/schools to identify their ideal college home before applying.

2. The college/school a student applies to at Cornell may have additional admissions requirements. SAT Subject Tests, specific courses, and other items may be required by the particular college/school to which your student applies. For instance, the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering require students to submit scores from two SAT Subject Tests, the first in any two subjects and the latter in a Math and a Science. The College of Architecture, Art, and Planning’s Architecture program requires an interview and a portfolio. These are a few examples of the nuances of each college/school’s particular admission requirements. Please note that Cornell requires official SAT/ACT/SAT Subject Test scores be sent directly from the testing agency. If this constitutes a financial hardship for the student’s family, counselors can email us at diversity@cornell.edu to discuss alternatives.

3. The supplemental essay holds great importance in Cornell’s admissions process. Students may think that the Cornell supplement is not a big deal given that it basically consists of a short essay. However, the admissions committee will read that essay to determine a student’s genuine interest in and fit for Cornell as well as how they will maximize that specific college/school’s academic and other resources. It is important to remind students that waiting until the last minute or not paying much attention to this small but mighty portion of the application is not wise.

4. Cornell’s admissions review is holistic and need-blind for domestic students including those with DACA status. The admissions committee looks at far more than grades and test scores. They will review all that is provided to weigh a student’s academic qualifications and ability to handle Cornell’s rigor, as well as several other aspects of the student’s life in and outside of the classroom. Cornell admission officers consider the full picture when selecting students for the incoming class. That is why it is so important that all required materials are submitted in a timely manner by the student and their school. Admission officers do not have access to students’ financial information, and students’ ability to pay will not impact their admission decisions. Even so, it is a good idea for students to begin both the admissions process and the financial aid process early to ensure all materials arrive on time. If you or your student would like to have a conversation with us about a particular situation, please email us at diversity@cornell.edu.

5. The Common App additional information section can be illuminating. This application section can be an excellent place for students to add context to information already presented in the application or to provide information that does not fit anywhere else. Students can include relevant information that is academic or personal in nature. They should keep their writing in this section brief and only include information that they believe is either not present or fully explained elsewhere and needs to be. This is a good spot for explanations about: class schedule changes, changing schools, obstacles overcome, chronic illness/other adversity that has impacted or is impacting academics, or anything else that the student wants the admissions committee to know.

6. Alumni contact meetings are not evaluative interviews, but are informative. Aside from interviews with the Architecture program (required), Art program (offered), and the Hotel School (offered), Cornell does not offer admissions interviews to applicants. Alumni contact meetings are offered at random by invitation to about 65% of applicants based on alumni availability. These are one-on-one informational meetings (in-person or by phone/Skype) where students can ask a Cornell alumni admissions ambassador about their Cornell experience, academic and other resources on campus, the admissions process, and more. These meetings are not evaluative, but we encourage students to attend if invited.

7. Cornell offers fee waivers. Application fees should never be a prohibitive factor in a student’s college application process. For students of lower-income backgrounds, fee waivers are available for the admissions application fee ($80). If students have questions about fee waivers, they can find more information here or they can feel free to email our team at diversity@cornell.edu. Lastly, a few alternative ways that our team can waive a student’s application fee are if the student’s counselor submits a NACAC fee waiver on the student’s behalf or sends us an email/letter briefly describing the student’s extenuating financial circumstances/hardship. The Undergraduate Admissions Office’s Diversity Outreach team provides guidance to underrepresented students and their families. If you or your students have questions at any point in the Cornell admissions process, please email us at diversity@cornell.edu or call us at 607.255.7233. Se habla español.
Cornell: Financial Aid 101

Cornell’s goal is to remove financial barriers and allow students the opportunity to invest in a Cornell education. More students than ever are able to graduate from Cornell with little to no debt; about half of all undergraduates receive substantial financial aid in the form of Cornell Grants.

The following financial aid initiatives exemplify our commitment to providing need-based aid that makes Cornell affordable for admitted students.

- **Parent Contribution Initiative**: Families with a total family income of less than $60,000 and total assets of less than $100,000 (this includes primary home equity) will have no parent contribution.
- **Loan Initiative**: Students from families with a total annual income under $60,000 will have no student loans as part of their financial aid package, reducing the debt owed by the student and/or family after graduation.
- **Award Matching Initiatives**: Cornell strives to match the family contribution component and lower loan level of financial aid offers from other Ivy League schools, as well as, need based offers from Stanford, Duke and MIT.
- **Undocumented Undergraduate Applicant Initiative**: Cornell will offer institutional financial aid to all admitted undergraduates who have been long-term undocumented students who meet our requirements.
- **Green Card Initiative**: Cornell offers institutional financial aid to admitted undergraduate international students who have been long-term Green Card applicants but have not yet achieved legal permanent resident status. Undergraduate students who are determined to satisfy our requirements will be eligible for need-blind admissions and need-based financial aid—like any U.S. Citizen or permanent resident.

Important things to remind your students:

- Financial aid applications have a due date... early decision applications are due in mid-November, regular decision are due in mid-February.
- The FAFSA and CSS Profile use prior, prior year financial aid information. This means students can start the FAFSA and CSS Profile in mid-October as soon as they are available.
- Cornell’s aid is all need based—we do not offer merit or athletic scholarships.
- If they have questions-ASK! We want this process to be as easy as possible.

Detailed information about the financial aid application process at Cornell, as well as our initiatives, can be found on the financial aid web site at: https://finaid.cornell.edu.

Top 10 Travel Tips for Traveling to Cornell

*By Calista-Rae Makanalani Campbell ’21*

College can be your home-away-from-home. There are several practices that can help them get there with more ease and comfort. You can encourage them to:

1. **Layout all the clothes you want to take...now put back half.** This may seem unnecessary, but many people have a tendency to overpack. (But, remember your winter clothes!)
2. **Bring their favorite blanket**. Especially for red-eye (aka overnight) flights, having something to cuddle up with helps when falling asleep. It is even helpful to sit on it if they start to feel uncomfortable in the seat.
3. **When traveling, whether its by plane or bus, never overestimate the need for a neck pillow.** I recommend one with lavender-scented beads as they can help take away some of that airplane smell.
4. **Pack some personal hygiene products in their carry-on.** Especially during long layovers, its so refreshing to be able to wash your face, brush your teeth, and put on some deodorant. Just make sure to follow airport security rules about liquids.
5. **Maximize carry-on space.** I found that a small hard shell suitcase and a duffle bag is the most effective for packing the most things. I reduced my two regular-sized bags into two carry ons and one bag.
6. **Bring two reusable water bottles.** I like having two water bottles because I use one for water and the other to refill with the complimentary drinks on the plane.
7. **Have a back-up non-electronic form of entertainment.** Even though most airplanes now have in-flight charging statations, there is nothing like passing time with a book or cross-word puzzle.
8. **Organize thier carry-on for the quickest way through security.** Make everything that needs to be taken out the most easily accessible. This includes their laptop, snacks, and hygiene products, so recommend placing these products near the top of the bag.
9. **Wear your heaviest shoes/clothing.** If they are worried about your regular-sized bags going over the airline’s weight limit, just put on your warmest, most comfortable pair of shoes/boots.
10. **Dress for the destination!** If you are coming from far away, know that Ithaca can be very different when it comes to weather, so dress casually and comfortably and remember to bring a jacket!
Welcome Shakima M. Clency, Associate Dean of Students for Student Empowerment and Director of First Generation and Low-Income Student Support

Hello counselors! I am Shakima M. Clency, the new Associate Dean of Students for Student Empowerment and Director of First-Generation and Low-Income Student Support. For the past 13 years, I have worked at several institutions in various capacities, including residence life, academic affairs, orientation, and most recently as a diversity fellow. Throughout my career, I’ve been drawn to positions that allowed me to help students pursue their goals, overcome obstacles, and benefit from transformational academic and personal experiences. I am excited about my work at Cornell because it provides a unique opportunity for me to focus my efforts on supporting and giving visibility to the experiences and needs of students who identify as first-generation and or low-income.

As a first-generation college graduate, I recognize the challenges and opportunities associated with helping first-generation students and their families make informed decisions about college. Applying to college can be an exciting yet intimidating time for many of these students. As they work to understand college terminology, complete complicated paperwork, and evaluate financial aid packages, some students may doubt their abilities to be successful in college. They may need you to help them overcome their fears by reassuring them that they have the talents and academic potential to succeed and thrive at an institution like Cornell.

My office focuses on fostering a sense of belonging, which includes connecting students to campus resources. Some of these resources are student-run, as one of the things that makes Cornell a special place is the students’ commitment to empower, advocate, and celebrate one another. Student-run organizations such as the First Generation Student Union (FGSU) and the Cornell Lending Library provide support, resources, and access for students from underrepresented and underserved communities. Through organizations such as these, student leaders work to make Cornell a more welcoming and inclusive place for all to thrive. This fall, 13% of the students in the incoming class identify as first-generation. We are excited that more students who are the first in their families to pursue a four-year degree are making the decision to attend Cornell and we look forward to the lasting impact they will make on our community.

If I can answer any questions or be a resource for you, your students, or their families, please feel free to contact me at Shakima.clency@cornell.edu. I look forward to welcoming your students to the Cornell community in the future.

Campus Visit Options for Bus Groups

To request a campus visit for a group of students from your high school or community-based organization, please email us at diversity@cornell.edu. Please reach out to us at least two weeks in advance of your group’s desired visit date.

If you and your students would like to experience Cornell first-hand, but cannot make the trek to Ithaca, we encourage you to connect with our community virtually by watching the Glorious to View video and following us on social media!

Fall Visit Dates
September 5th to December 5th: Day and overnight visits
Last overnight date is November 13

Diversity Outreach

Undergraduate Admissions Office
Cornell University
410 Thurston
Ithaca, NY 14850

Phone: 607.255.7233
Email: diversity@cornell.edu
Twitter: @CornellUAO

Questions about Cornell?

Cornell is a private, Ivy League university and the land-grant university for New York State. Cornell’s mission is to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge; produce creative work; and promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community. Cornell also aims, through public service, to enhance the lives and livelihoods of our students, the people of New York, and others around the world.

Our faculty, students, alumni, and staff strive toward these objectives in a context of freedom with responsibility. We foster initiative, integrity, and excellence, in an environment of collegiality, civility, and responsible stewardship. As the land-grant university for the state of New York, we apply the results of our endeavors in service to our alumni, the community, the state, the nation, and the world.