

FACULTY FORUM ON CORNELL 1969: KEY ISSUES THEN AND NOW

MAY 3, 1999

J. Robert Cooke, Dean of the University Faculty: "I'm Bob Cooke, Dean of the University Faculty, and I would like to welcome you to 'Cornell 1969: Key Issues Then and Now', a forum for the faculty of the university. This forum was organized jointly by the President of the University and the Dean of the Faculty.

"The events of 30 years ago left a powerful imprint upon this University. Those times and events were indeed complicated, and even today we continue our efforts to comprehend and to draw lessons to guide our future. The recent publication of Professor Donald Downs' book, Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University stimulated our interest in having a public dialogue. Professor Downs kindly agreed to join us today to assist with that discussion, and joining him are some of the most distinguished members of the Cornell Faculty. President Hunter Rawlings will open the discussion with a welcome and brief remarks. He will be followed by Professor Downs who will then have 15 minutes to summarize the major issues as he sees them. Each of four panel members will be given 6 minutes each to offer their insights. That will be followed by 15 minutes in which the presenters interact among themselves to comment on each others' presentations and the questions raised. That leaves one hour for questions and comments from the audience.

"In the first 15 minutes of that hour, I will call upon those who had a direct part in the events of 30 years ago or those persons mentioned in the book to offer comment or questions. After about 15 minutes, I'll then recognize questions from anyone. The Dean of the Faculty in 1969 was Robert D. Miller. I am aware of his desire to make a statement so he will be the first member of the audience to be recognized.

"We have a single floor microphone at front and center of the auditorium. We'll form a queue of two lines -- one at the front of each aisle. We will alternate the speakers from left to right to recognize the speakers who would like to pose a question or make a statement.

"You should be aware that we are making a video recording of this afternoon's session and will be producing a transcript for historical purposes, and we will allow posting of op ed pieces on the University Faculty website to allow more extended commentary by both those who are present and by those who could not attend today. To have that put on the website, send it to our office and we will take care of the details.

"My introduction of the speakers will be brief. In the order of appearance, our speakers are: Hunter Rawlings III, President of the University; Donald Downs is the author of the book and was a Cornell undergraduate in '69, and is now at the University of Wisconsin where he is Professor of Political Science, Law and Journalism and Mass Communications; Dale R. Corson is President Emeritus and was Provost in '69; Robert L. Harris, Jr., joined the Cornell faculty in 1975 and is a former Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center; Kenneth McClane, was a student here in the fall of 1969 and is now the W.E.B. DuBois Professor of Literature; and Walter LaFeber, the Marie Underwood Noll Professor of American History, and was an active faculty participant in the events of 1969.

"When a speaker's time has expired, I'll provide a one minute grace period for closure. We will now proceed with the presentations, calling on President Hunter Rawlings.

Hunter Rawlings III, President of Cornell University: "Thank you, Bob. I'll note that you went one minute over your time, so I hope you won't be too harsh on the rest of us. I would like to thank Dean Cooke for working extremely hard to make this event possible. He spent a great number of hours on the telephone

working with a great number of us to ensure that this took place. I really appreciate his tenacity in giving us an opportunity to discuss this so, thank you, Bob.

"It is a pleasure to welcome you to this Forum on Cornell 1969, and its meaning for us in the Cornell of 1999. The panelists we have assembled today offer us an opportunity for discussing some of the most poignant and significant events in Cornell's history, events which continue to affect many members of the campus personally and powerfully. They also shape our view of Cornell's identity as an institution, because they have both substantive and symbolic significance that transcends their own time.

"Indeed, the issues raised by the events of 1969 are timeless: they engage matters of race, politics, faculty governance, academic freedom, student power and protest, and administrative leadership, matters fundamental to society and to universities. In reviewing the history of Cornell in 1969, the phrase 'academic freedom' occurs with some frequency. Though this term is broadly current among faculty members, it is not in general use among students or the wider public. We can find a useful discussion of academic freedom in the Cornell Statement of Principles and Policies contained in the Campus Rules of Conduct: 'The principle of freedom with responsibility is central to Cornell University. Freedom to teach and to learn, to express oneself and to be heard, and freedom to assemble and lawfully protest peacefully are essential to academic freedom and the continuing function of the University as an educational institution. Responsible enjoyment and exercise of these rights means respect for the rights of all. Infringement upon the rights of others or interference with the peaceful and lawful use and enjoyment of University premises, facilities and programs violates this principle.'

"We are here this afternoon to do what universities should devote themselves to: discussing such issues intelligently and civilly and with a view towards enhancing our understanding. We are not here to offer judgments, 30 years after the fact, on individual behavior or blame. The issues we address are complex, vexing, and sensitive to individuals and groups. They, therefore, require the most careful and honest consideration.

"We are fortunate to have a superb panel to help us address these issues. Donald Downs, author of Cornell '69, is Professor of Political Science, Law and Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Wisconsin. He was an undergraduate student at Cornell in 1969 and thus an eyewitness to many of the events here. His extensive research into this history gives us a basis upon which to form opinions about the events he describes in great detail in his book.

"Dale Corson is President Emeritus and Professor of Physics at Cornell, a distinguished educator and research scientist. He was an active participant in the crisis of 1969 as Provost of the University. He has been a wise mentor to me and to many other Cornellians throughout his long career here.

"Bob Harris is a member of Cornell's Africana Studies and Research Center. He has served on Cornell's faculty for 24 years, and has also been Special Assistant to the Provost since 1994. He is the author of numerous articles, the recipient of many research grants and postdoctoral fellowships, and a frequent lecturer at universities and research centers.

"Ken McClane is the W.E.B. DuBois Professor of English and Literature at Cornell, and a noted poet who, as we shall learn, was attracted to Cornell as a freshman in the fall of 1969 by the events of the prior academic year.

"Walter LaFeber is the Marie Underhill Noll Professor of American History at Cornell. He has won numerous awards for his scholarship, most recently the Bancroft Award for his book The Clash: US-Japanese Relations Through History. Professor LaFeber was an active participant in numerous faculty discussions during the

events of 1969 and is thus both eyewitness and historical analyst. I look forward to an informed discussion of a critically important part of Cornell's history. Professor Downs, please start us off."

Donald A. Downs, Professor of Political Science, Law and Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Wisconsin: "Thank you. I arrived in Ithaca on Saturday night and had two glorious days of sun and I suppose I forgot what it used to be like, but the clouds are coming back and I feel at home again. Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to Cornell and to President Rawlings for inviting me to this forum.

"I graduated from Cornell in 1971 as a rather confused, uncertain young man, a status that was no doubt a product of both historical and personal factors. Back then I would never have imagined that I would one day be standing here to discuss a book like Cornell '69. Among other things, the book is an attempt to make sense out of those powerful times, at least in terms of their impact on higher education. I think that what happened here was extremely important, and its effects were both good and bad.

"The book is about at least two things. First, what really happened in 1969. This is the journalistic aspect of the book, which I took quite seriously because it is a great story and the truth has never been told. If you disagree with my conclusions, all I can say is that that is your right, and that you had thirty years to write the book before I did. Second, I deal with the implications of those events for higher education. I hope the book provides an opportunity to rethink the relationship between the quest for justice and the principles of intellectual freedom that lie at the heart of liberal education and, indeed, the constitutional order. I wrote the book in two veins. First, I tried to tell the story in as fair and accurate a way as possible. This has led certain critics to identify me with certain positions that I do not endorse. And also, I took a stand, so it's a combination of narrative and advocacy. In terms of the latter, I took a stand in the book in favor of the university's (and individual's) obligation to pursue truth above and beyond politics. As Hannah Arendt taught in an important yet strangely ignored essay published in 1967, truth and politics must remain fundamentally separate for ethical and democratic reasons. Arendt maintained that 'it may be in the nature of the political realm to be at war with truth in all its forms.' Now, let us reflect for a moment on what this statement, if true, means: a politicized university would 'be at war with truth in all its forms.' Now, though many individuals, indeed, probably most, resisted this effect, a critical line was crossed in 1969 at Cornell. In my view, this crossing was a harbinger of the politicization of the universities of the 1990s. This was the motivation I had in writing the book, to suggest links.

"On the other hand, my own career has embodied an ironic relationship between truth and politics, an irony that I think lies at the heart of Cornell '69. First, I teach and write in the fields of public and constitutional law, and political theory, fields in which enduring principles interact dialectically with important historical currents. Second, Cornell taught me the importance of campus and polis citizenship. I took this lesson seriously, and drew on it in making my own contribution to the success we have had at Madison in recent times in our drive to reunite the university with the principles of free speech and academic freedom that were once its main legacy.

"In the 1950s, for example, Joseph McCarthy was afraid of criticizing all those liberals at Madison because he was afraid of the university professors who had resisted him in the early 1950s. Then in the later 1980s, we led the way in passing campus speech codes. Then, two months ago, Madison became probably the first university in the country to effectively rescind a speech code on its own initiative (that is, without being forced to do so by a court). And our success was the product of our argument and a political movement, no doubt about it. No one thought we could win, but we did.

"Thus, there is an irony lurking in Arendt's fundamental distinction: truth and politics must be separate, but the pursuit of truth requires the protection only commitment and power can provide. Sometimes it takes politics or a social movement to make truth known, for example, with the consciousness of domestic

violence in the past few years. This is an irony as old as Socrates in the Crito (where citizenship and truth are intimately linked) and Plato in the Republic (where Plato recognizes how philosophy will remain endangered unless power embraces it or, at least, defends it). As thinkers as diverse as Hobbes, the Framers of the American Constitution and, more recently, Stephen Holmes show that a sufficiently strong state is needed for liberal virtues to flourish. Liberal freedom has what Holmes calls an 'ironic' relationship with power. In 1969, Cornell was a paradigmatic case of this irony.

"Now, these points are relevant because the most telling image of Cornell '69 is of an administration unable to defend the principles of liberal education in the face of powerful claims of racial and social justice, and in the presence of coercion in the form of guns and threats of mass violence. One of the most disturbing, yet telling, quotations in the book is the statement by a mathematics professor upon his return to the campus after the guns became known, in which he cited Machiavelli's statement that a man who is armed can never respect, by the nature of things, a man who is not armed. Indeed, Machiavelli begins The Art of War with the image of thinkers able to discuss high matters because the army has secured the peace of the state beyond the walls of the garden wherein they dwell.

"The Cornell crisis also shows that such things as belief, faith, and commitment (the willingness to take real risks to accomplish or defend important principles or ends) are needed to defend the principles of free intellectual inquiry. In 1969, the AAS and the SDS, movements that I praise in the book, were the ones who possessed passion and commitment. They were willing to take risks to carry their visions through, while the administration and the faculty wavered, probably in an all-too-human way.

"The Cornell crisis was largely a crisis of liberalism when all is said and done—a crisis I dare say is still with us. Erstwhile defenders of liberal principles were for the most part disabled for at least four reasons: 1) By circumstances; before they really knew what happened, the guns were out, there was a massive student movement, and deputies down the hill, ready to cause trouble. It's very hard to act in those situations and make deliberate decisions. 2) By a lack of commitment to liberal principles especially in the face of totally understandable racial guilt. 3) By the simple fact that intellectuals, devoted to a life of the mind, are not usually very good (nor should they be, perhaps) at political organizing. Reason—;as so many thinkers in the history of philosophy have understood—is frail in the face of the energy of commitment. (Nietzsche said that reason is our frailest capacity 'because it is our most recent.') In Reasoning and the Logic of Things, Charles Peirce maintained (not unlike W.H. Auden on poetry) that such things as belief and commitment are not categories of the world of pure thought. 'Pure science has nothing at all to do with action,' he wrote. Perhaps this is one reason that trying to organize professors is like trying to be a shepherd to cats. Finally 4), the university lacked a center of gravity because of the ambivalence of the administration, the fragmented effects of the 'multi-versity,' and the lack of sustained, organized, faculty presence.

"Into this vacuum, student power swept, creating a revolutionary situation. To borrow another, ostensibly different, notion of Arendt, the absence of political engagement and responsibility left the faculty and administration at the mercy of events. This meant that necessary and inevitable social and educational change was not sufficiently, in my estimation, influenced by the principles of liberal education and freedom, at least at that time. Two events in the book epitomize this state: first, Provost Corson's noble, yet futile, effort to rally the faculty to support academic freedom and the rule of law in the wake of the physical cowering of James Perkins in Statler Auditorium on February 28. The plan failed because of ruptures in the faculty and because it was too late to achieve consensus. Without an infrastructure in place, which could only be constructed by painstaking democratic politics, the effort crumbled. Corson told me that the fault lay with both the faculty, who seldom spoke out in favor of academic freedom until it was too late, and the administration. It takes time to build public presence for these academic freedoms. The second scene was the Arts College meeting a day before the faculty reversed its vote on April 23. By this time, what Milton

Kahn has called an 'Hobbesian' state of nature prevailed. An apt image for the center no longer holding on. The falcon could no longer hear the falconer.

"So where does this leave us in terms of the relationship between truth and politics? Unlike such critics as Alan Bloom, I do not endorse a completely apolitical university. I agree with Ortega's admonition in Mission of the University. He says, 'Not only does [the university] need perpetual contact with science, on pain of atrophy, it needs contact, likewise, with the public life, with historical reality, with the present, which is essentially a whole to be dealt with only in its totality...The university must be in the midst of real life, and saturated with it.' I wouldn't be at a university if this weren't true.

"But Cornell '69 begins with another quotation from this book, in which Ortega holds that universities, like other entities, must honor and maintain their own integrity by being true to their distinctive ends. This means that while vibrant universities open their doors to the vital forces of history and society, their engagement must be on their own distinctive terms, which is the pursuit of truth in the form of rigorous forms of knowledge and intellectual freedom. Politics cannot be denied, but at universities it must not dominate the processes by which we seek truth and knowledge. Economist George Hildebrand made an important point in this regard in his oral history interview, which followed in the wake of the Cornell crisis. He said that it was acceptable for individual professors to take political stands, but the institution, *qua* institution, should not, for if it does, it creates an institutionally sanctioned orthodoxy that casts a pall over dissent and intellectual diversity. The overt politicization of an institution differs profoundly from the political positions of individual professors. If the former prevails, the results are not promising, as the suppression of dissenting thought on American campuses as whole in the later 1980s and into the 1990s shows.

"When Donna Shalala assumed the chancellorship of the University of Wisconsin in 1988, she said that the mission of the university was the achievement of social justice. What followed was a regime of speech codes and related policies that led to several years of orthodoxy, the stifling of dissent, and several Kafkaesque investigations of professors that ultimately sparked the movement I discussed above. That might be the topic of my next book.

"Now, I don't think this is what a university should be about. Anyone who really cares about teaching finds himself or herself engaging in Socratic inquiry with the individual minds and intellectual consciences of students. Such 'care' for students has no room for indoctrination. Each mind is an end in itself that should be shown how to pursue its own intellectual destiny with the rigors of a liberal education. This is where teaching and constitutional freedom join hands because the single most important constitutional right is that of individual conscience. Respect of dissent is imperative in this regard.

"In conclusion, to the extent that Cornell 1969 furthered the critical examination of racial issues in the late 1960s, so much the better. My book clearly celebrates that aspect of the crisis. History was knocking at the door and had to be welcomed. But, to the extent that Cornell welcomed a new form of politicization from within the university, so much the worse. I leave it to you to comment on what the years were like after 1969, which I do not develop. My own experience was in the exposure of the suppression of dissent in contemporary universities by such writers as Nat Hentoff, Jonathan Rauch, Allan Kors, and Harvey Silverglate (all of whom assisted us in our movement at Madison), which show in great detail the many ways in which universities have stifled dissent among students, faculty, and outside speakers in the name of preventing offense or hostile environments.

"Everyone knows that there are certain types of speakers who will either not be tolerated or tolerated only after going after agonizing gymnastics that no other institution in America would have to suffer. Ralph Reed and Ward Connerly are two such speakers who put my university to the test last year, and we did not live

up to the task.

"I think that we can do a lot better. But only if administrators and faculty unite to take these principles seriously -- to take these principles as something worth fighting for and, more importantly, as something worth taking criticism for. I hope that this forum shows Cornell's intention in this regard. If so, welcome to the movement. I'm always bad at conclusions, so all I can say is thank you." (Applause.)

Dale R. Corson, President Emeritus: "I congratulate Professor Downs on his exhaustive study of the 1969 Cornell crisis and, while I don't agree with all of his conclusions, I'm grateful that he has given us this scholarly analysis of a very complex situation.

"I want to say a word on behalf of President James Perkins. Professor Downs exposes to the brilliant light of day Perkins' shortcomings in handling the crisis. No one knows those shortcomings better than I, but Perkins deserves credit as well. He did some great things at Cornell. He came here in 1963 in a time of great national civil rights struggle and turmoil. Schools were being desegregated. Doors of Southern Universities were opening for black students for the first time. Yet Cornell had only eight black undergraduates at the time. Perkins saw this as outrageous and set about correcting it. By 1969, we had 250 black students. Without James Perkins this would not have happened. Black students who came during those years have gone on to great achievement and we're proud of them.

"The issues that precipitated the 1969 crisis were complex -- issues that universities had no experience in resolving. Perkins was not a field general. He was an educational theorist who, at the same time, was a man of action. If those of us who were his close associates had been more adept, we could have spared him and the campus some of the trauma that Downs deals with in his book.

"My principal purpose is to define some of the issues at play in 1969, issues, which beset not only Cornell but also the whole country, issues which prevail today.

"The first concerns the mission of the university. Professor Downs puts it succinctly: Hutchins vs. Perkins. Robert Maynard Hutchins, at age 30, became President of the University of Chicago in 1929 and continued to 1945. He had a large hand in building the great Chicago of today. 'The University', Hutchins said, 'should educate students in single-minded pursuit of intellectual values nurtured by the liberal arts. The university must not surrender its distinctive meaning and form to external forces.' Perkins, on the other hand, embraced the land-grant concept of taking academic learning to the problems of society. We have an extension service to do just that, as do all land-grant universities -- Wisconsin, Minnesota, and California. The Universities must be directly involved in the great social issues. Which model shall it be?

"The second issue is integration vs. separatism. We started the Perkins minorities program with integration as our goal and it didn't work. It hasn't worked in society at large. Tom Wicker, former New York Times columnist, wrote a book titled Tragic Failure: Racial Integration in America, 'The world is beset by separatism, whether by religion or race or ethnicity or tradition. Can a university set itself apart from the world and go forward in an integrated way, when everyone else is going in another direction?'

"The third issue is academic freedom vs. racial justice. When a faculty member is prevented by force or by fear from discussing openly and freely his beliefs and convictions about his specialized field, there is no university. When students are offended, and their beliefs denied, there is no justice. Where does sensitivity to another's belief end and political correctness begin?

"How does the university guarantee academic freedom? It can't. It is absolutely essential that all elements of the community -- the administration, the faculty and the students -- understand the concept and

subscribe to it wholeheartedly. There's a big problem, however: many students do not understand or, if they understand, they sometimes put their own concerns first. In '69 there was much too little talk, by the Administration and by everyone else, about the problem. The faculty had little comment when the President was pulled from a microphone. It is ironic that it was a faculty group that sent the President a letter telling him they had lost confidence in his ability to protect their academic freedom. Where were they in the microphone episode?

"Finally, in the end, when do we use the police power of the state to resolve our campus disorders? At Cornell, the Administration worked hard and cooperatively with local law enforcement agencies to keep the police away, although they could have come anytime. I can say only that we had no fatalities. Spartanburg (one of the traditionally black colleges in South Carolina) had four, UCLA had two, Stanford two, Kansas two, Wisconsin one, and a year later, Kent State four. What if we had had the National Guard here in 1969? What policy should we recommend to our successors? Thank you."

Robert L. Harris, Jr., Associate Professor, Africana Studies and Research Center: "Straight to the point! Unfortunately, Professor Downs' book and presentation are grounded in the context of his struggle with the issue of 'free speech' at the University of Wisconsin. He makes the personal the universal, as if what has taken place at Wisconsin applies to all institutions of higher education, and specifically to Cornell. I do not know much about the situation at Wisconsin, but I do have some sense of the situation here at Cornell, having taught here now for twenty-four years and having just this past November 11th moderated a presentation and discussion with Ward Connerly, who in Professor Downs' example, is the litmus test of free speech on college campuses. Well, Professor Downs, we had, at Cornell, a reasoned but certainly passionate discussion with Mr. Connerly about his views on affirmative action. Students very effectively argued their opposition to Connerly's ideas and in several instances left him speechless by the persuasiveness of their arguments. One of the problems with the celebrity speakers that you mention is that they generally do not come to college campuses to participate in reasoned discussion but to present their positions, collect fat honoraria and, if they generate some controversy, all the better for demanding even fatter honoraria down the road. If you are indeed concerned about free speech, it seems to me that your concern should not be for the public spectacle but for the opportunity to engage different ideas in settings where students and faculty have an opportunity for reasoned discussion rather than the format of a forty-five minute presentation and fifteen minutes for questions.

"I am certainly an advocate of free speech and open inquiry because it works both ways. As a student of African American history, I am familiar with the silencing of W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson during the 1950s when they were hounded by the U.S. government and denied passports to travel abroad because they believed in the principles of a just society. As a graduate student in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a time that you cover in your book, but for which you do not give us a context from the perspective of black students, I entered an intellectual environment, based on entitlement and privilege. Sterling Stuckey, one of my mentors, wrote in 1971: 'Whether we like it or not, the contest between black and white will be waged no less sharply on the intellectual plane than on other levels of American life, and this should not be astonishing. It was just a matter of time before the rage which led us from Montgomery to Selma to Watts and Detroit, challenging institution after institution, would finally register (and explosively) in the intellectual arena'.

"As a graduate student more so than as an undergraduate, I had to confront an intellectual orthodoxy that devalued black life and culture. I say more so than as an undergraduate because I was fortunate enough to attend Roosevelt University in Chicago as an undergraduate, an institution that was founded because of quotas against Blacks and Jews in nearby colleges and universities, and that had one of the most diverse faculties, especially for the study of black life and culture, with among others St. Clair Drake, Charles

Hamilton, Hollis Lynch, August Meier, and Lorenzo Turner. So when confronted as a graduate student with Kardiner and Ovesey's Mark of Oppression in which they hypothesized that African Americans emerged from slavery with ' . . .no intrapsychic defenses -- no pride, no group solidarity, no tradition,' and that 'The marks of his previous status were still upon him ---socially, psychologically, and emotionally. And from these he has never since freed himself.' Or, Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan's reference in Beyond the Melting Pot to the absence of middle- class values and norms among African Americans in general. Or, Edward Banfield's conclusion in 1970 in The Unheavenly City that 'If there is something about Jewish culture that makes Jews tend to be upwardly mobile, there may be something about Negro culture that makes the Negro tend not to be.' Fortunately, I knew better and did not have to become defensive or too exercised about those stereotypes. But it is not easy to have to sit in a class and to hear and to read that black people have no history of accomplishment in Africa, have contributed nothing to the development of civilization, are basically pathological, and are hedonistic, i.e. find it difficult to delay gratification. I found all of this very insulting, especially the allegation that African Americans were hedonistic, because I knew that my parents had sacrificed to send me and my sisters to parochial school, because they believed we would receive a better education than in the public schools, and that we had to ride on buses or subways to get from one part of the city to another, because my parents bought a house before they bought a car. And they were not alone in postponing present satisfaction for their children's future.

"Professor Downs does not give us much of the context in which black students confronted a privileged environment that gave those within it a sense of entitlement. And when he does, he usually gets it wrong, as when on p. 62, he refers to the rise of Black Power ideology ' . . .which gripped Cornell's blacks after the summer of 1966, when SNCC mounted the move to admit James Meredith to the University of Mississippi.' Meredith graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1963. It was in the summer of 1966 that he organized the march 'against fear' from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi, that was resumed by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Stokely Carmichael, among others, after Meredith was shot during his one-man pilgrimage. It was during that march that Carmichael and Willie Ricks launched the call for Black Power.

"Professor Downs has stated in his opening remarks that 'In 1969, the AAS and the SDS were the ones who possessed passion and commitment, and they were willing to take risks to carry their visions through, while the administration and the faculty wavered.' Perhaps it makes for good copy, but Professor Downs has a way of painting extremes, of making everything a zero-sum game, in which there are only winners and losers. If the New York Times has quoted him correctly, he opposes affirmative action because it gives rights to one group, while taking them from another, a zero-sum game.

"Professor Downs does not tell how the student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s expanded opportunity and opened doors for the previously disenfranchised, how it dismantled entitlement and privilege, and how it has made this a more democratic society, which I fervently hope is one of the purposes of higher education."

Kenneth McClane, W.E.B. DuBois Professor of English: "There are many people here who are better qualified to discuss the events depicted in Donald Downs' book Cornell '69. I was not at the university during 1967, 1968 or the Spring of 1969. Many of you were participants; many of you -- whatever your positions -- struggled to ensure the heart of the university as you best understood it. If there is one thing I respect in Professor Downs' book, it is his rich documentation of the high seriousness with which so many members of the faculty, administration, and others acted.

"The Downs' book is unnecessarily harsh on the Cornell administration of that period. I, for one, found the Administration's actions -- however we might judge them in hindsight-valiant attempts at preserving human life -- and that to me is the most sacred responsibility of any governing entity. No one died at Cornell, and that is no small accomplishment. Let us remember that in those turbulent years, there were students killed

at Kent State and Jackson State and two in Montreal. Had the university brought in the outside police during the Straight incident, there might have been a bloodbath, and then this university, most certainly, would have been irreparably damaged.

"If I have one great hesitation about Professor Downs' book, it is his failure to argue scrupulously for the contextual Cornell, though understandably, the center of our concern was not the only place riven by race, campus activism, or dissention. It was in the proverbial air; and let's not forget that the air, too, was noxious with a war in Vietnam in which we should have never fought.

"Some would have as believe that the world only intruded on the idyllic life of the university when black people came here. Let's be honest. This university has been debating its connection to the outside world, its responsibilities to commerce and society, since its beginning. In many ways, it is what we are discussing today. That we have professional schools, that we are a wonderful hybrid of the humanities, the sciences and extension divisions; that we are a state-supported public institution and a private one, with a credo that celebrates the felicitous wedding of the theoretical with the pragmatic, makes us not Harvard or Yale. We are different. Harvard does not have an ILR School or an agriculture college. We are an educational anomaly and a wonderful intellectual confection. Let's be proud of what we are.

"To their discredit, Yale and Harvard did not take inner city kids in large numbers in 1963. Cornell did, and Cornell should be celebrated for so doing. Just as Cornell should be celebrated in 1872, just 7 years after its founding charter, for being the first Ivy League University to admit women. We have a proud history of social activism. Let us not, in our desire to hear one of the important tenants of the university -- the life of reflection -- fail to acknowledge Cornell's other distinction: we are societal participants.

"Professor Downs' book suggests that some faculty felt that the university moved too precipitously in admitting Black students in the 1960s, that our haste resulted in the troubles climaxing in 1969. I would argue that the university had to act as it did if it were to be true to its creed. This great university took the Kerner Report to heart. It realized that this nation was two nations, one black and largely impoverished, the other white, and increasingly alienated; that a substantial subset of our citizenry was dangerously disenfranchised, and that educating a handful of black students, the usual eight or so from Choate and Andover, would not save us from collective societal ruin. The COSEP program was not only pioneering; it was Cornell at its best.

"As Downs' book suggests, there are those who felt that the faculty should have been more firmly involved in COSEP, that they should have been brought into the discussions from the outset. And ideally, that should have been the case. But I ask you as a faculty and only you know the answer: Would you have been willing to change the culture of this place? Would you have brought in large number of black students without President Perkins' orchestrating the process? In my twenty-four years here, I haven't seen much to make me sanguine. The problems of Harlem, or Iowa for that matter, are often a far remove from these lofty reaches.

"Please don't misunderstand me. I am not condoning coercion, guns or intimidation. That has no place here. Nor am I suggesting that the university can be the laboratory for every social ill or cause. I understand the importance of serious reflection and scholarship. As a poet, I survive largely because of the university's especial mission --how pragmatic a pursuit is a poem in this country?

"Still, we are a human institution, one with a social mandate; people expect life-enriching things from us -- and well they should. I do not agree that a university should be socially uninvolved. We are already too dramatically implicated in the society by our history and our actions -- look at our cooperative relationships with industry and government, which are often mutually beneficial. It is not only idealistic to claim that the

university should be aloof from society; it is totally disingenuous. The true debate, I would hazard, concerns the nature and educative cost of this interconnection. What is the proper balance?

"In 1963, Cornell made a courageous commitment to inclusion, indeed to American reality, that I want to applaud. I am here today because this university, unlike any other university at the time, was willing to face race honestly. In 1969, I came here as a freshman because of the Willard Straight Hall takeover. I could have gone elsewhere. As someone who grew up in Harlem, and who traveled downtown as the first black enrolled in this nation's oldest private school, I respected Cornell for trying to confront a fractured world I knew all too intimately. May this great university continue to debate the delicate balance between social involvement and intellectual pursuit; but may we always remember that Cornell is not merely the Arts College or the English Department or the Hotel School, but a constellation of announcements and intelligences, which by their very nature, for good or ill, have great social implications. No matter how much we might wish otherwise, to paraphrase St. Augustine, 'We are in the world and the world is in us.'"

Walter LaFeber, Marie Underwood Noll Professor of American History: "I want first to agree with Bob Harris about celebrities and identify myself with Bob, Dean Glenn Altschuler, and Professor Isaac Kramnick that we move to consider to declare Cornell a celebrity-free zone. (Laughter.) I also agree with Bob about the need for intellectual conversation and, indeed, if I heard him correctly, the need for intellectual struggle on race and other issues. In Donald Downs' remarkable book, certainly full of remarkable research, I think he poses the question correctly right in the beginning when he says that what happened to Cornell in 1969 was the creation of two cultures, two academic cultures, but I think that they went beyond academia. The first culture, Professor Downs says, was committed to the academic principles of liberal education and academic freedom. The second, he says, was committed to the principles of equality and social justice. I think that frames the issue correctly and I think that the way he frames it defines the tragedy at Cornell in 1969 because it should never have come to that. Many of us who were committed to academic freedom and liberal education did not think that social justice was an issue. We assumed that was the point why we were here, why we were teaching, why we were educating undergraduates, and why we were participating in faculty debates. Nor did we think that the issue of equality was antithetical to academic freedom or a liberal education. If we had thought that, we would have been in another profession. The real tragedy at Cornell was that the administration, the faculty, and the students allowed the situation to get to the point where, indeed, academic freedom and social justice became antithetical to one another, until finally guns were introduced onto the Cornell campus.

"We should be very clear about the facts. Before the Willard Straight Hall takeover, the number of African-American students increased as Dale Corson told us. Before the Willard Straight Hall takeover, the principle of an Africana Center was accepted and there were negotiations with the director of that center. Before the Willard Straight Hall takeover, the penalties for the black students were already reduced. The question was not whether Cornell was moving towards what many of us thought was social justice. The question became whether or not we would be able to continue to teach and function in the context of academic freedom and a pursuit of social justice when guns and physical intimidation were introduced onto this campus. Academic freedom is not an abstract issue. Academic freedom determines the kind of undergraduate education that Cornell students are going to get. Once it is restricted in one way, shape or form, and the boundaries of knowledge are determined by social pressure or by physical threat or intimidation and not by responsible reason or discussion, then Cornell has lost its reason for existence, and Cornell undergraduates ought to ask for their money back. "Once Cornell professors, as Downs has illustrated in his book with many examples, feel that they can no longer teach what they want to teach because of the threat of physical intimidation or violence, then Cornell is going to lose its first-rate faculty and, I think, it deserves to lose its place in American higher education.

"One observer has noted that real power in this society does not lie in the ability to twist arms on behalf of civil rights bills or to force people by physical intimidation to accept your point of view. Real power in this society for long-term change comes from the ability to convince others to accept civil rights and to accept your point of view. This is why this observer says, I think correctly, that Martin Luther King, Jr. did more for civil rights than John F. Kennedy.

"My guess is that, one hundred years from now, there will be two contemporary documents of the 1969 crisis that we will read. One of them will be Jim John's, who is here today, statement to the university faculty about the principles of this university. The other is speech that George Kahin made on April 25 to the Barton Hall audience. In that speech, Professor Kahin laid out the case for academic freedom. What he pointed out was that social justice varies from generation to generation. It always varies. And it must be debated and it must be protected. He recalled that when he was here in the 1950s, McCarthyite informers were in his class, passing on information to the FBI. Cornell protected him from what then passed for social justice for many Americans and many U.S. government officials. What it could not protect him from in the 1960s was from threats from within the university so that he could teach and function as he thought he ought to. He thought this was highly ironic, because at the time, he was one of the most important people in the United States opposing the Vietnam war and much of the work he had done about the closing of the war had been done on this campus under the guise of academic freedom and now, as he said, those freedoms were disappearing. He said at the end of his speech, 'I use the term 'university' advisedly because if academic freedom disappears, there will be no university.'

"It would be beyond irony, it would be a tragedy if, when we talk about this situation, we who condemn the use of violence, physical intimidation, and threats to persons in the larger society, rationalize, tolerate, or excuse, in any way, the use of force and the threats of intimidation in a university like Cornell. For if we do, we have, indeed, as Professor Kahin said, lost our reason for existence. Thank you."

Dean Cooke: "We now have 15 minutes set aside for conversation among the speakers from the panel. It will be free form and without moderator."

Professor LaFeber: "I want to make a comment to what Dale Corson said, and I do this with great sensitivity because, quite clearly, the reason I'm here is because Dale became President. I mean, I said that I was going to leave Cornell if Dale did not become President and Mr. Perkins did not leave. The reason I stayed was because Dale became President, and that's one of the many burdens he's going to have to bear for the rest of his life.

"Dale made a statement, however, of how the faculty did not support the President on issues of academic freedom, and I just want to correct the record in two ways. First, as Downs puts out in his book, after the McPhelin incident — that is the black students' seizure of the Economics Department in the Spring of 1968 — there was a commission chaired by one of the most distinguished people at Cornell, indeed internationally, in the study of race relations in the world, Robin Williams. That report asked that the administration uphold the principles of academic freedom. That report was buried by the administration; there was no response to that report. Indeed, the Dean of the Arts College essentially wrote a report that helped bury the Williams Commission Report.

"The second thing that I want to get straight is Dale's and other people's references to the incident on February 28, when the President of the University was physically pulled off the stage at the Statler. The university faculty did not make a response and I did not make a response to that and there was a reason. I heard about that on the radio that night, about 11:00 p.m., and I called President Perkins at home. I asked him what had happened and we talked about it. I said that I thought it was intolerable and he passed it off. He said that it was something that we would get over and have to work out. He was clearly not interested in

protecting his own freedom of speech or prosecuting in any way the students who had physically man-handled him on that stage. When I heard this, I think that it was the first time I thought that we had essentially lost the battle, that things were out of hand if we could not protect freedom of speech for the President of the University and, more importantly, that the President of the University told me that he was not interested in protecting his own freedom of speech. But we tried, Dale, we tried."

President Emeritus Corson: "I'd like to just make a brief comment to Walt's statement that nothing came out of the Williams Commission. It's a very complex issue, as is everything that we will discuss today, and I came here determined not to rehash all of those unhappy days. I had hoped that I would not live long enough to have to celebrate it one more time. Just a word about the complexity -- let me quote from the Faculty Meeting Minutes from May 1, 1968. 'The Provost now briefly commented on the work of two commissions. The commission chaired by the Scarborough Professor of Social Sciences, Robin M. Williams, concerning events culminating in the sit-in in the Economics Department had presented its report to the President and the Dean of the Faculty the day before, April 30, but it bore the date of April 26, but had not sanctioned its release. The chairman of the committee had presented the report but not sanctioned its release. The Cornell Daily Sun had secured part of the report and had published it and the Provost went on to say that the material in the Sun had been secured by an act of deception and contained one major error. He urged the faculty to hold comment on the substance of the report until the full text became available.' Everything that Walt said is correct, but boy was it complicated, and I'm going to let it rest."

Professor Downs: "Let me make a couple of responses to some of the comments. I'm very much in agreement with Professor LaFeber concerning the concept of social justice, which, of course, will always be a concept that we debate — it doesn't have one singular meaning. But as a 20-year-old student, it didn't seem to me that it was necessary for social justice and the principles of academic freedom to be in opposition as they were. I think that one of the major motives in writing the book was to show that the opposition was not necessary. There will be conflicts and tension because we can't always resolve our differences on the notions of social justice, but in a university those competing notions should be part of the marketplace of ideas. There's no question about that. I would argue that at a university the principles of academic freedom must be the trump card. I'm not sure that I would construe this as a zero-sum game as Professor Harris has stated. In the end, if there's a conflict between the two, then the university really has no choice. I agree with Professor LaFeber that if there is no academic freedom, then the university has ceased to exist."

"This leads me to the comment about the relationship between the university and society. In my book and in my talk, I don't argue for a completely independent ivory tower university. The university has to be engaged in society, there's no question about that. But the question is how it does so. Maybe we have to distinguish the essential from the non-essential. The university is going to be engaged in society on both intellectual and practical levels, in terms of technological research, it's a complicated business. But what a university is ultimately about is the pursuit of truth and a necessary means to that end is the protection of all ideas, regardless of how uncomfortable some ideas might be. When a university does engage society, it has to preserve those fundamentals or, as Professor LaFeber says, it is not a university."

Professor Harris: "I just want to take this opportunity to clear up something. The Africana Studies and Research Center experienced a difficult birth, but it will be in existence for almost thirty years. Unfortunately, I think Professor Downs has locked the Africana Center into a particular time period. On page 302 of his book, he says that 'one professor who is well-known in his area of research told me' (and, of course he does not identify this individual because this individual wanted to remain anonymous, but I hope that we can differ in exchange of ideas and not have to hide behind anonymity) 'that the Center is still quite a separate organization. It is not yet integrated into the rest of the university.' He mentioned the case of the

Center showing a surprising lack of interest in a permanent scholar that his department sought for a joint appointment.

"I want to take this opportunity to present Professor Downs with a copy of the Africana Studies certificate that's administered by the Africana Studies and Research Center. On the front it says 'The Africana Studies Certificate, Cornell University'. It's administered by the Africana Studies and Research Center but this is something that embraces five undergraduate colleges in the university, draws from courses that are taught in those five undergraduate colleges all pulled together by the Africana Studies and Research Center, so I don't know how we can be all that separate."

Professor Downs: "I confess, and I did mention this in my talk, that in events after 1969 I'm light-eyed. In that particular part of the book I was presenting one side of the argument as to the virtues of the Center and I had this one quote that provided an alternative argument. I would have, indeed, liked to have carried the research after 1969, but time constraints and the Press wanting to get the book out at the time it did, prevented it. I acknowledge that I do not have the story after 1969 on the Africana Center."

Dean Cooke: "We will now field questions from the audience and because of his central role in the events of 1969, the Dean of the Faculty then, Robert D. Miller, has indicated a desire to make a statement. With your permission, I will ask him to go first and then we will form two lines at the front for those who wish to come to the microphone."

Professor Emeritus Robert D. Miller, Soil, Crop, and Atmospheric Sciences, and former Dean of Faculty (1967-71): "Old timers here may recognize me as Bob Miller, sometime professor of soil physics in what was then Cornell's Department of Agronomy. I was serving a term as Dean of the Faculty when events recounted in Professor Downs' book Cornell '69 were happening. In his book, he says of me, 'Some would question his commitment to the broader principles of the university during the crisis, but while some individuals second-guessed themselves, Miller felt secure in the value judgements he felt compelled to make.' Indeed, I did feel secure in some of my judgements, and I still do, and these include my judgement that the late James Perkins, however encumbered by mannerisms and style more suited to a university presidency in the buttoned-down fifties than the unbuttoned sixties, was badly treated by members of this community. Alas, it is my judgement that Professor Downs treats him badly as well. Badly means unfairly.

"Were I to catalogue the creative talents of James Perkins, it would hardly advance today's discussion. Instead, I will illustrate the problem I have with Cornell '69 as an exposé of his failings. In selecting an illustration, I carefully avoided anything directly relevant to the character of President Perkins, but nevertheless a demonstration by example of certain shortfalls in the quality of Cornell '69 as history. Was an event involving thousands of potential witnesses with conflicting perceptions of the facts just too much for one professor, two research assistants, and a score of students to handle with a deadline to meet?

"Chapter Nine, entitled: *Day 2: The Deal* begins by narrating the morning meeting of President Perkins and his executive staff on Sunday, April 20, 1969. Professor Ernest Roberts, Secretary of the Faculty, and I were invited to sit with them. The topic: What to do about what was at that moment the only significant demand being made by students occupying the Straight, students who had sent out for firearms the previous evening after hearing a frightening, albeit false, rumor about a second invasion of their stronghold. Their demand, of course, was that certain reprimands imposed by the Student Faculty Board of Student Conduct be nullified.

"The President reviewed Saturday's failed efforts to end the occupation. I assumed that his purpose was to consider possible items for a statement to be carried to the students as a way to re-open negotiations. As he spoke, I jotted down my own thoughts about such a statement on a handy envelope. I now pick up

Downs' account near the bottom of his page 192: 'Miller interrupted to say that we were not being realistic as to what the situation was, that we had to deal with the students' demands in some way or we had no choice of arriving at a negotiated settlement. Miller presented the draft of a three-part presidential statement he had written: (1) the new problem was more serious now than previous crises; (2) the reprimands could be dealt with only by the faculty meeting as a whole; and (3) the president would call a faculty meeting and present a motion for nullification. The statement caused a commotion because it amounted to giving the AAS what it wanted with nothing in return.' That's the end of the reading from Chapter Nine.

"Hereafter, try to keep in mind that what I've just read from Cornell '69 seems to tell a casual reader that Miller saw the demand for nullification of reprimands as a new and serious problem and wanted the president to call a faculty meeting to ask the faculty to yield to that demand. Nothing more. But is that a reasonable representation of Miller's statement?

"Four footnotes are associated with the four-paragraph segment that that includes this nine-line excerpt. All four refer *only* to Dr. Gould Colman's 1969 oral history interviews with me, one of which mentions the draft statement but says nothing about there having been three points. Thus, the evidence suggests to me that Professor Downs or one of his assistants found in the archives either the original envelope listing three points, by number, or a typed transcription of the draft mentioned in a footnote inserted in the text of my oral history. Professor Downs had asked for and received my permission to copy transcripts of those interviews.

"A few days ago in the oral history archives, I consulted the typed copy mentioned in the footnote. I will read the actual words I found, amended only by filling minor gaps in the telegraphic prose in which my draft was written. Yes, it did indeed consist of three numbered points: '1) No matter what the fate of [the] demands, the major issue at this moment is the seizure of a building and the presence of firearms in that building, the consequences of which will present much more difficult problems for all than the demands themselves.' Recall Professor Downs' paraphrase: (1) the new problem was more serious now than previous crises. My Point One was about the occupation and the firearms rather than the demands for nullification that one would logically infer from what I read to you from Chapter Nine a few moments ago. '2) In their belief that devotion to principle [on] judicial questions by both sides has allowed what was originally a minor dispute to escalate into an extremely dangerous confrontation, the faculty will be asked, in the interests of [the] personal safety of all, if it is willing to nullify the action of SFBCS at an early meeting. The Administration cannot promise that the faculty will grant this request, but it will inform the faculty that it feels that this would be a small price to pay to back all concerned away from the brink. This recommendation to the faculty will be contingent upon an orderly evacuation of the building.' Professor Downs' paraphrase: (2) the reprimands could be dealt with only by the faculty meeting as a whole. The thrust of my Point Two required the students to end the armed standoff and forfeit leverage by evacuating the building before the Faculty would be summoned to respond to a request for nullification. And, of course, there could be no promise that the Faculty would grant the request. '3) We are convinced that firearms came into this picture as a defensive, rather than an offensive measure. We regret that our assurances [for] your personal safety were not accepted. You must recognize that you have set forces in motion [sic], and have surely aroused [the] concern of civil authorities responsible for public safety. These the university may influence to some extent but it cannot control them.' Downs' paraphrase: (3) the president would call a faculty meeting and present a motion for nullification. This version has no relation to my Point Three, with its implicit warning: Look out! Professor Downs then wrote: 'The statement caused a commotion. . .'. But my oral history, the only source identified for the several paragraphs in question, said: '. . .the President, [and] the others, sat there, rather silent for some moments.' I'll stop my recital at that point, although alas, I could go right on.

"The example I've used has what I regard as far more serious counterparts elsewhere in Cornell '69. I could have chosen an equally well-documented example from among those which, when taken at face value, are highly detrimental to the reputation of President Perkins. Instead, I deliberately chose a few lines that do not involve personalities other than myself nor any hearsay evidence in a test of the success of a scholarly endeavor by a fellow professor, his assistants, and his students-with a deadline.

"To return to my point, I again suggest that James Perkins was badly treated then and again now in Cornell '69. Read it with caution. I rest my case."

Dean Cooke: "Let me offer Professor Downs an opportunity to respond, then any member of the panel, before we open for questions and comments from the audience."

Professor Downs: "I'll do my best. I had a hard time following all of it since the acoustics were not perfect. I had a variety of sources for my interpretation. Professor Miller's oral history was very important in this regard. There were also many others, people who were observing what was going on. I had a variety of data and a variety of sources. Sometimes I cited it; sometimes in the interest of proceeding on to a particular analysis, I would not cite it until later when it was necessary. I made my best effort of trying to present the picture from the evidence as we saw it. That's all I can really say. I was not able to follow in detail what you were saying and this is the kind of question or concern that I would have to look at my sources and the material and decide whether or not I made a considered judgement. Professor Miller, I disagreed with some of the stances you took but I also did my best to be fair to you. I acknowledged your virtues and your concern for the university. When it came to these particular decisions, the evidence showed me that you were under pressure and that you were taking the side that we needed to resolve it. I think it was Professor McClane who said that there are two particular viewpoints: Those who wanted to resolve the crisis and save lives and those who argued that the price of doing so was to forsake the principle of non-coercion in a university, having to grant amnesty too early, and that the university cannot allow that to happen without a significant cost. In some ways, this might go back to Professor LaFeber's notion of the two cultures or at least it has a similar kind of polarization: those who under the pressure saw a need to save lives and those who were more willing to wait because they were less willing to sacrifice the principles of non-coercion and, ultimately, academic freedom. You came down on one side and I identified with another. The evidence might be interpreted differently based on one's own normative perspective."

Dean Cooke: "Anyone on the panel wish to comment further?"

Professor Miller: "I don't want to take anymore time; as they say in Washington, 'I've used my time.'"

Dean Cooke: "Thank you, Dean Miller. I'll give a few seconds to those of you who were direct participants or were quoted in the book. Everyone else who wishes to speak, form two lines in the front and we'll alternate. Please use the microphone, give your name, and, if you care to, identify your role in the '69 events."

Professor Emeritus Benjamin Nichols, Electrical Engineering: "In 1969, I was a member of what was called the Faculty Council, which was the executive committee of the faculty and which Professor Downs, to my surprise in terms of my own participation, cites in his book as quoted by others as being a tool of the administration. I think that the administration would be surprised to hear that. There are many things that I would comment on. First of all, I understand Professor LaFeber's defense of academic freedom and the aversion to the use of force, but I question the degree to which his academic freedom was threatened. And while I respect former President Corson, I think that Professor LaFeber's academic freedom would have remained even if Mr. Perkins had remained President. One thing that I did learn from the book, which I was unaware of, was the degree to which the faculty, Professor LaFeber and others, worked very hard to force

Perkins' resignation. Two things bother me about this discussion. The first is the assumption made in the thesis of the book that what happened in 1969 was a day of infamy and an awful event for the university. I don't feel that way and I think that the things that happened were unfortunate, but in some ways, the university became a much better place as a result of the 1960s and of '69. The thing that bothers me most about the juxtaposition of academic freedom and social justice is that it leaves out the subject of education. What I found, in terms of working with many African-American students at the time in the desire of getting courses that would be relevant to their own history and what they were doing in the community, is that what they were looking for was an education that was not available. They were asking for courses from faculty members who deal with these issues, but they were not present. They were not something that our faculty seemed to be willing to provide. In fact, in the discussions in trying to get those programs we met with mostly faculty resistance. I still hear these issues with Women's Studies and Latino Studies. It seems that it's still something that academic freedom needs to take into account. There's more that I can say, but that's my time."

Professor Downs: "I wish to respond quickly to Professor Nichols' comments regarding academic freedom and opening up more courses. I addressed it in the book and I agree with it. I think it's really a question of how and on what terms. In terms of the Faculty Council, my understanding of the evidence is that you were probably an outstanding exception to the general reputation that the Faculty Council had and some of the faculty at the time. Then again, the faculty was not united in its perception of what was happening, but a large number of faculty in terms of my evidence, didn't believe in the Faculty Council's independence to the extent that you did."

Caleb Rossiter: "I'm one of the few people in the audience who beat Don Downs to the punch. During that thirty years, I wrote a book about Ithaca in the 1960s and it included a few chapters on the Cornell crisis. My conclusion then, in analyzing what had been written up to date, is very similar to what I would like to share with Don today and this incredibly distinguished panel. At that time, the only narrative of the Cornell crisis was Alan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind. I was astonished in reading Alan's discussions because he was writing, as was implied in Professor Corson's remarks, after Jackson State and Kent State, after it was clear that the introduction of armed law enforcement onto a campus can be a tremendously risky business. Here is Don writing three years after my book in which I did look carefully at Cornell's experience after 1969 with academic freedom. My feeling is that we romanticize the university and that's keeping us from looking carefully at what happens. For all of the discussion today of democracy and the rule of law in the factual, legal, and scientific sense, the university is not a democracy. The university is a corporation. New York State considers it a corporation. Final decisions are not made by faculty or students on a referendum; they are made by the Board of Trustees, as a legal entity. Disruptive student protest has always been an element when you have such an undemocratic system. You don't have votes from the students on whether we're going to keep investing in South Africa. No, we have an illegal, disruptive anti-apartheid movement. You don't have votes on whether we're going to continue, in the 60s, to support the Vietnam War through the Cornell Aeronautics Lab. You have a disruptive, illegal protest movement. This is inevitable in the nature of the university. I don't think that we lost the rule of law; I think on that day we really gained democracy. Why would I say that when there was a mob in Barton Hall? Democracy, as Fred Kahn has said in relation to this crisis, is the consent of the governed. If ever there was a day on the Cornell campus when the vast majority of administrators, faculty, and students had an effect on what the decision was going to be in this terrible standoff between the rules of a faculty-student judicial body, which are important but always subject to waiver by the Board of Trustees, and the desire to save lives and create a culture here in which Black Studies and the studies of other oppressed groups could occur, it was that Wednesday of the Cornell crisis. I, like Professor Nichols, think that for all of the mess of that day, and my family in particular can say this since my father was one of those threatened by a member of the African American Society -- ironically after he had made up his mind to go with the rest of the faculty -- I can say that this was a day of democracy as

well as crisis." (Applause.)

Professor Downs: "After having lived under a university administration for so long, I find it problematic to romanticize universities. Sometimes universities seem to me to be the last medieval institutions left in our society. I think that there's a difference between the institutional side and the side of teaching. Anyone who teaches and has to face students in the classroom has an internal sense of mission. Teaching has its own terms, which cannot be reduced to the individual mechanisms of a university. In terms of democracy, democracy is both good and bad. It's not everything. Democracy means majority rule and, as Tocqueville has taught us, majorities can also be tyrannical. That's why we don't have a pure democracy in this country; we have a constitutional democracy. Democracy believed in slavery. So democracy is not the end-all. In a constitutional democracy, the will of the majority is limited by constitutional restraints and respect for others. That delicate balance is something that a university that fosters the principles that we have been talking about can contribute to."

Assistant Professor Anna Marie Smith, Government: "I want to add my voice to many people on the panel who criticize the false dichotomy between an interest in social justice and positions that are anti-freedom of speech. Like many people, I came to this profession with an interest in social justice but also as a very firm supporter of free speech. I don't think that position can be emphasized enough with the kind of clichés we have around the issues today. The second point I want to make is that one of the things that has changed between the university of 1969 and the university of today is gender and the presence of women. In the story that I read not only in the paper but in other accounts, women are almost invisible, and that's something to be talked about. Finally, I want to talk about this notion that political correctness has some kind of hegemonic position in today's academy. I've been at Cornell for 8 years; 2 years as a postdoc and 6 years as a tenure-track professor. I've tried to add my voice to what I hope have been thoughtful conversations about lesbian/gay studies, program housing, the Humanities Council Report, and the pro-UAW Low Wage campaign. I can't tell you how many tenure-track professors, graduate students, and other junior people on this campus have come up to me and said, 'How can you dare be so outspoken? Aren't you afraid of losing your job? Aren't you afraid of not getting tenure?' Do you know how many people have told me that? I just think that is really something. Those people are Cornellians. That should give us pause." (Applause.)

Professor Downs: "I certainly agree that there is no necessary tension between social justice and academic freedom. The way that I define political correctness is not based on a particular substantive or political viewpoint. It's a frame of mind that is intolerant of the kind of dissent that we're talking about here. So the way I define political correctness, I would see a tension between political correctness and academic freedom. But political correctness and social justice are certainly not synonymous."

Dean Cooke: "Would anyone from the panel like to speak? If not, we'll go from this side and then on to Professor Cushing Strout after that."

Professor Richard Baer, Natural Resources: "I was intrigued with Ben Nichols' juxtaposition of academic freedom and social justice. It seems to me that another juxtaposition would be academic freedom and censorship by omission. In my experience, Cornell is a less diverse university than it was 25 years ago when I came. We have roughly 30 faculty in our Government Department with one conservative, which is not quite as bad as Harvard with 50 faculty and one Harvey Mansfield. In Human Development and Family Studies, students almost always hear liberal and left-wing views of family, marriage, divorce, and so on. They almost never hear traditional religious views or conservative political views. It's my sense that if we really want to talk about academic freedom, we have to make an effort to get different ideas at the university, too. Blacks didn't have much academic freedom when they weren't part of the faculty. It wasn't a concept that was very useful. It's my experience that at Cornell conservative secular ideas and normative religious ideas are

simply censored out of the university. We don't invite those people, we don't seek those people to add to the dialog. It's the reason why there's so much indoctrination at Cornell and so little education. I would urge us and hope that we make a serious effort to go out of our way to bring new voices into the mix. In my own field of ethics, it is still assumed that ethics, normative ethics, will be taught from the secular standpoint — it's as if the whole post-modernist critique had never been made. Why are there not Catholic theologians and Jews doing normative work in ethics? It's as if we still believe the old enlightenment myth that secular reason is epistemologically privileged. I don't think that holds anymore so I would ask the panel if they have any thoughts about how we could become more diverse in terms of ideas and stop discriminating so much against conservative secular ideas and normative religious and moral ideas. There's a mention of a celebrity-free zone. Thank God we still have a few celebrities come as conservatives to speak at Cornell because in the arts, the humanities, we have very few faculty to represent these views. They have not been made welcome here. We're not looking for them. It's as if we don't want the students to hear real diversity of ideas that would engage their minds and hearts in new ways." (Applause.)

Dean Cooke: "Perhaps this is one for the Ithaca-based members of the panel. President Rawlings first."

President Rawlings: "I would just like to say, gratefully, that if there is indoctrination at Cornell, that it's not having much impact on our students. I find that students here range from the far left to the far right with many in-between and that students here are quite capable of coming to their own conclusions. I, for one, don't subscribe to the theory that Cornell has a heavy weighting on one side or another. There may, indeed, be some such weighting within individual departments -- I'd be surprised if there weren't -- but I think that across the spectrum, you'll find just about everything represented and students are remarkably good at making up their own minds."

Professor Downs: "Was there a study done about the party affiliation of the professors at Cornell? Maybe focusing on the social science departments? If my numbers are right in terms of recollection, it's about 25 to 1 in terms of democrats, which I think is an interesting point. In society as a whole, democrats and republicans are evenly distributed. I wonder if some of the people who say that there is not a threat to academic freedom — and again I don't know Cornell after 1969 — but is there a bias in terms of right versus left? Do conservatives run into the kinds of tensions that those on the left don't run into?"

Dean Cooke: "Anyone from the panel?"

President Rawlings: "Well, I'll just say briefly that I don't think parties give much consideration to party affiliation in making selections. In fact, I doubt if many of them give it any consideration at all. I have very little of the political affiliation of faculty members. I would find it surprising if you did not find certain balances in some departments and other balances in other departments. My guess is that the Department of Sociology and the Johnson School have somewhat different drifts, politically. But I think that students understand that and I feel that it's not incumbent on the university, in fact, it's a silly notion, to try to mirror the percentages of republicans and democrats in society when trying to select professors." (Applause.)

Professor Cushing Strout, Ernest I. White Professor of American Studies and Humane Letters Emeritus: "I was, in 1969, a spokesman for a group of 41 professors, but I'm not going to talk about that. Like most professors when they get a new book, they look at the back and see if their work has been cited, and in this case it wasn't, but I sent it to him in the mail. But I wanted to read the sections of the book in which I was particularly involved, and I want to say on his behalf, of course we have bypassed the book on many times, that everything he said about me is absolutely accurate. (Laughter.) That's not a joke. It's not easy to be accurate about me (laughter) because I have been caricatured many times by friends and enemies. If you're not visibly on one side or another, for your own reasons, you're sure to be caricatured. He does not do that.

There's not one phrase or sentence that is inaccurate about me. He's not only accurate, he's also understanding, which is even more remarkable. Other people will have to speak for themselves about whether they are treated that way. I was and don't have a complaint.

"I do have a criticism though. It is an ethical criticism about when he talks about the ultimate good and the ultimate morality. I think he gives a romanticized view of conflict. He says that putting your body on the line was the idiom of the 1960s. He says Tom Jones did this in defense of the Afro-American Society, having put the faculty in danger, and by his own threatening that some would be 'dealt with.' By the same token, Downs is also admiring Professor Donald Kagan, a friend of mine, who in his opposition to the AAS, according to Downs, felt comfortable with the prospect of physical violence that lay psychologically at the heart of the showdown at Cornell. Would that it had only been psychological. It was much more genuinely real than that and much more frightening. In any case, it seems to be that this ethic of putting your body on the line is not the ultimate highest good, and I say that as someone who fought in the Battle of the Bulge during the second World War as an infantry soldier. I know something about what it's like to be in that kind of conflict. It's not the highest good for me, and I don't think it's the highest good for a professor. The best criticism for that has been made by Isaiah Berlin, the greatest current, English, liberal philosopher, now dead. This is the way he put it: 'It's a kind of moral tyranny to believe that that is the highest good.' The point was that romantic stance and parallelism were a form of moral tyranny. That should be judged not by whether they kept their heads morally and politically, when others lost theirs. That is a modern standard, but not an exacting one.

"The other thing I wanted to say is that it always amazes me that I'm surrounded by people who will say, 'I'm entirely in favor of freedom of speech except in this case,' 'I really, truly believe in academic freedom, but you can't support this person, surely.' It's as if they believe that these cases come to us in a pristine way — that the person whose free speech needs to be defended is someone that we agree with. If that's true, we don't have to defend them. We only have to defend people we don't really agree with; people who are repellant, and even abhorrent, we have to defend. That is the great problem with free speech. It's a very artificial position to take; it's not what we instinctively do. Instinctively we are partisans, either for or against. You're either for or against the Vietnam War. I was against the Vietnam War, but if a speaker comes to the campus and represents a different position I'm not going to defend him on the ground that he agrees with me or doesn't agree with me. This is a genuine difficulty that we have. We want easy cases of academic freedom and free speech. The law charges us with defending a view we don't like at all, which I encountered as a teacher at Yale in the 1950s. I gave a lecture on the new conservatism and criticized Buckley who, at that time, had just left Yale and had written a book, God and Man at Yale, arguing that there was no God at Yale, a position that many students took. When I criticized Buckley and referred to Senator Joseph McCarthy as an irresponsible demagogue, I was booed and hissed. One of the students went to the department chair and complained about me as being intellectually arrogant, to which I didn't know whether to confess guilt or not, and the chairman said to me, 'Come into my office; defend yourself. What do you have to say?' My response was, 'Why don't you come to the class and find out for yourself?' (Laughter.) So when I came to Cornell in the 1960s, I was not surprised to find a possible threat to academic freedom from student organizations. It had already happened in the 1950s and had become more dangerous and virulent in the 1960s because of SDS and the Black Liberation Front. They were organizations that were devoted to detected heresy of one kind or another.

"A lot of people have suggested here that there really wasn't a danger of academic freedom but most people I know who say that are teaching something like physics, chemistry, or biology, where there was no threat in 1969 to what they were teaching. But suppose you were Walter Burns, who was teaching Constitutional Law, and has a conservative position on constitutional law. He left because he felt that the administration would not defend him in the future. He had good reason to think that the administration

would not defend him based on the record of what had happened in recent years. So it all depends on what field you are in. Are you highly sensitive to current heresies or not? Let me give you one more example. I used to teach Ralph Ellison because I loved his book and because I admired the complexities of his views on the race problem in America. All the time that I taught him, I realized that his views were entirely heretical from the standpoint of the Afro-American Society, the growing Black Studies Center, and the Black Liberation Front. They would have nothing to do with his views. Why? Because he was opposed to black nationalism. He was opposed to black separatism. He believed that black culture and American culture were interpenetrating. There was no black culture apart from American culture; there was not American culture apart from black culture. I still think those views are true but whether or not they are those were heretical views at that time. He was never invited to speak at Cornell, although he was invited to many other colleges. I think it is a very interesting fact that he was never invited here, but that is the kind of heresy-hunting that creates the violation of academic freedom that has not been emphasized sufficiently in our discussion." (Applause.)

Dean Cooke: "Professor Harris."

Professor Harris: "Yes, this is an issue that cuts both ways and it's one of the reasons that I say that I am a very strong defender of academic freedom and freedom of speech. The story that I have shared a number of times with Joan Brumberg, who is in the audience, is about when I was finishing graduate school and I was on the job market. I already had an offer from the University of California at San Diego but I was interviewed at the University of Virginia. While I was giving my seminar, someone came in full Confederate regalia. I didn't let that upset me too much, but I did look around to see where the exits were because I thought that if someone came in next in a Klan outfit that I was leaving. (Laughter.) But, the real point of the story is, and I brought this book which I recommend that everyone read, Annette Gordon Reed's Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings: An American Controversy, because my job interview was over on the way from the airport when I asked Merril Peterson, the chairman of the History Department at the University of Virginia, whether he believed that Thomas Jefferson had children by Sally Hemmings and he told me absolutely not. I, as a young, maybe naïve, maybe brash, graduate student, pursued it. He told me, 'Mr. Jefferson could not have had children by Sally Hemmings' and I said, 'But on X day. . .' and he said, 'No, no. You don't understand. Mr. Jefferson could not have had children by Sally Hemmings.' This issue cuts both ways, Cushing. There were some of us who, because of our views, were denied an opportunity to teach at certain institutions in this country."

Dean Cooke: "We have about ten minutes remaining and to be consistent I was checking here to see if anyone was waiting and if not, I'll call on Professor Edmondson.""

Professor Locksley Edmondson, Africana Studies and Research Center: "I guess you'll have to admit free speech at some time. (Laughter.) I'm not quite sure where to begin. I am a former Director of Africana Studies from 1991-96, so I guess I was one of the objects of Professor Downs' very perfunctory concerns, your non-research concerns toward the end of your study. I'm also a political scientist, and as a political scientist there are some issues that I would like to raise.

"What is politics? In your introductory paragraph you mentioned that universities should not take a political stand; they should not be politicized. But what is politics? Are you here, perhaps, saying that the politics of the status quo is not politics and the politics of transformation is politics? Where does politics begin and end? It's a very serious intellectual question. When we struggled for divestment from investment in apartheid many of us were told that we were politicizing the university. They and the Trustees could not understand that they had already taken a political position to maintain and retain their investments in South Africa and to keep the status quo. I think we have to be extremely careful how we throw around language for our convenience. Speaking of South Africa, let me just ask you to clarify one thing. On page

131, you mention the incident with Perkins being pulled off the stage after Krause, 'founder of the liberal South African newsmagazine. . .defended the regime of apartheid.' Now I know that guy. He's an absolute friend of apartheid throughout the years. Yet you say that he founded a 'rather liberal South African newspaper.' I'm just asking you to clarify because I'm totally confused."

Professor Downs: "It's liberal *qua* South Africa."

Professor Edmondson: "Yes, but for you to imply that anyone who defended the most vicious, racist regime after World War II could even appropriate liberal credentials in whatever context, and you didn't put it in quotation marks is unbelievable. It's your language and I want your definition of 'liberal'."

Professor Downs: "Should I respond right now?"

Professor Edmondson: "Go ahead."

Professor Downs: "Well, I realize that I should have put quotations around it because calling it a liberal publication was what the documents that I read about his publication told me. I'll have to look at that original source to see whether or not it is liberal. It would not be my definition of 'liberal,' which I touched on."

Professor Edmondson: "But you admitted that he was a friend of apartheid."

Professor Downs: "Yes, I concede to that."

Professor Edmondson: "Let me also ask, then, as a political scientist, if it would be reasonable to assume stratification in the political parties. Of course I do not come from this political culture but I think I know enough about it — the ideologies are different because what would be liberal here would be downright conservative in much of Europe — when I was told that most of the faculty are democrat I was led to believe that there were liberal, conservative, and radical democrats and liberal, conservative, and radical republicans. If I misunderstand American political culture, please correct me."

Professor Downs: "With that aside, I still think it indicates a basic tilt."

Professor Edmondson: "But still, Professor Downs, for you, as an accomplished political scientist to throw out a statistic like that as the center and not be more careful in your research. . ."

Professor Downs: "This wasn't part of my research, it was just a comment to substantiate. . ."

Professor Edmondson: "But this is the final question. You admit that you didn't do the research on Cornell after 1969, yet you make certain judgements in the last chapter about how Cornell is today and, to be frank, you shaft the Africana Studies Department. You call it 'separatist, political' because of what one professor told you. One professor. No investigation done to find if there were alternative views. You quote Professor Turner or mention him saying that the views of some will not be welcomed at the Center. This does not mean that those views are suppressed or that they would not be discussed. It's totally against the principles on which the Africana Studies Center was founded. Finally, it seems to me that if you do not have the information, you ought not, as a respectful academic in searching for the truth, commit yourself to a line because it fits your current argument that the Africana Studies Department remains political or separatist. You have done a grave injustice, not just to the Center, but to your own scholarship."

Professor Downs: "Two quick responses. One is that I do acknowledge that the Center has played a role at Cornell and that there has been interaction and, two, it wasn't just that one person who told me that."

Several people supported that. I quoted and cited the one. It wasn't simply that one piece of evidence."

Dean Cooke: "Okay, anyone else on the panel wish to comment? We have time for one more question or two short questions since we promised to adjourn at 6:30."

Robin Palmer, Class of '59: "I was not here during the uprising, but I did take part in the uprising at Columbia University where 500 were arrested and hauled off to jail, in contrast to what happened here at Cornell. It seems to me that this whole discussion here, which is about to end unfortunately and I'm not sure it's not by design, is resisting seeing the specter that is in this room, that was in Cornell in 1969, that was in the country, and that was in the world. Only two of the speakers on the panel have made reference to it, and that's the Vietnam War. Professor McClane speaks of the contextual importance of what took place then. He refers to the Vietnam War. Professor LaFeber does also. The rest of the speakers do not. That's why I say that it's a specter because, as Professor McClane said, it was in the air. What happened at Cornell didn't just happen at Cornell; it happened all over the country and all over the world. They rioted in France and they rioted everywhere. They rioted. It was fairly tame here even though there were guns here. There were no guns at Columbia, but there were no arrests here. So what's happening here is that this specter is still around because we're not facing what happened then. I noticed, for instance, on the Forum that there is not a single representative of those who took part in the takeover. I doubt there's any in the room. And yet, one of those is on the Board of Trustees of Cornell, but he's not here tonight. I'm sure there is a lot of internal politics that has to do with that. It is the key element that what took place at the Straight has been and is marginalized."

Dean Cooke: "Could you please wrap up?"

Mr. Palmer: "Yes. Now, black students — and by the way, I'm a conservative republican now (laughter) and I don't presume to speak for black students — in the Vietnam War were being drafted, which is another specter that hasn't been mentioned — drafting and conscription — disproportionately. Those who came to Cornell were privileged and they were fighting for their survival because if they didn't make it here they'd be drafted and sent to Vietnam instead. That's something that better not be forgotten, especially in light of what is happening in Europe."

Dean Cooke: "One more person has been promised a time to speak after the panel has a chance to comment. Does anyone on the panel wish to comment? Okay, we are serious about getting out close to 6:30. Professor Norton."

Professor Mary Beth Norton, Mary Donlon Alger Professor of American: "I came to Cornell in 1971, so I was not here in 1969. I have two quick comments. One of which is related to what Robin Palmer just said. I lived through 1969 at Harvard University where the guns on campus were in the hands of policemen who came to take the occupying students out of University Hall in the middle of the night, where the entire university went on strike for a number of days, and where the entire academic year ended in chaos. Accordingly, I very much appreciated the comments of the panel members about how bloodshed and arrests were avoided on the Cornell campus. Also, as several people in this room as well as Dale Corson know, once I arrived on campus, I very quickly became involved in campus politics in the successor organization in the wake of 1969, the University Senate, which did establish an infrastructure that was able to deal, I think successfully, in diffusing the next building occupation that occurred at Cornell University, which as been forgotten precisely because it was diffused. That was the Takeover of Carpenter Hall on the Engineering Quad with a demonstration against the Vietnam War after what had been a demonstration in Collegetown. I recall this vividly since, as the Speaker of the Senate, I was one of the people who crawled in through the windows to negotiate since the doors were chained. I was one of the people who negotiated getting Dale Corson into the building to end the event as I'm sure he remembers. So this is kind of a report from the front, Mr.

Downs, that the infrastructure was created after 1969 that helped avoid subsequent events in the future. I'll make one other comment which has to do with Anna Marie Smith's comment. I think you'd also be interested to know that the History Department, which had no women here in 1969, is today 1/3 female with a woman chair." (Applause.)

Dean Cooke: "President Corson?"

President Corson: "Professor Norton didn't mention that the discussion she negotiated was at two o'clock in the morning." (Laughter.)

Dean Cooke: "Any other comments? I have a short announcement, but first I invite you to join me in thanking the panel members. (Applause.) I can imagine that you may wish to chat briefly with them after the meeting, so I will invite them to leave the auditorium if they wish so that you may greet them.

"The University Faculty is sponsoring a dialog on Campus Climate. A committee under the leadership of panel member, Bob Harris, and Bob Johnson of Cornell United Religious Works, are chairing this effort. They have had conversations in two academic departments this semester as a pilot for an effort for next year. The hope is to extend the dialog to topics that are difficult to have a discussion about to all 100 academic and non-academic departments.

"So give the panelists a chance to slip out first and thank you for joining us this afternoon."

Adjourned: 6:30 p.m.

Kathleen Rasmussen, Associate Dean and Secretary of the University Faculty