

Annual Report

Office of the Dean of Faculty

2016-17

Overview

I started my term as Dean of Faculty by completely redoing our website with Karen Lucas. A key to having effective shared governance on campus is to have an engaged faculty that is fully informed and the website plays a critical role in that. Faculty are extremely busy so the trick is to make it easy for them to (a) find information relevant to their job, (b) track what is happening on campus, and (c) understand diverse points of view.

Much of my time this year was spent leading the Academic Calendar Committee with Vice Provost Rebecca Stoltzfus. We had a dozen committee meetings, ran numerous town halls, and set up online surveys that engaged thousands--all with total transparency. In May the assemblies and the faculty senate were asked to rank three possible calendar options. That information and our detailed committee report will soon go to the Provost who will make the final decision.

We formed an ad hoc committee that has looked into everything associated with faculty retirement and the awarding of emeritus status. Our recommendations were well-received by the deans and the department chairs. They involve a clarification of the process, a handy checklist to assist both the candidate and his/her chair, and the creation of a new title: associate professor emeritus/a. Because Senate approval is required, the committee's work will not wrap up until the fall semester.

The fatal stabbing that occurred on campus just after the start of classes last fall caused a great deal of angst. The pace of the necessarily careful police investigation and the confidentiality that surrounded it prompted discussion about safety on campus and police-community relations.

The presidential election prompted protest and a heightened level of political debate and introspection. Among the faculty there is a feeling that free scientific inquiry is under attack and that support for the humanities and social sciences is in particular jeopardy.

Looking ahead to next year, three items will dominate our agenda. First, we plan to completely renovate the Faculty Handbook. It is filled with inconsistencies and ambiguities. Second, we will work with graduate students, faculty, the Title IX Office, and others to create a more effective policy that addresses the issue of consensual relationships between students and supervisors. And third, regardless of the new academic calendar that is adopted, we have one

year to get ready for its implementation. Among other things, this will involve an overhaul of fall orientation and a complete rethink of the study/exam period. It is absolutely essential to have a fully engaged faculty as we set out to make improvements.

Faculty Senate Highlights

The faculty Senate meets once a month. Here is a month-by-month summary of the meetings that were held this year.

September. President Rawlings discussed the importance of curriculum review. Dean Gretchen Ritter (Arts and Sciences) and Vice Provost Laura Spitz (International Affairs) discussed the upcoming University Librarian search

October. All the deans associated with the College of Business came and led a discussion about the new unit. Vice President Joanne deStefano discussed campus safety in light of the Mazaire stabbing death. A resolution in support of renaming the Cornell Plantations as the Cornell Botanic Gardens was passed.

November. The 2035 Carbon Neutrality Report was presented. Provost Michael Kotlikoff described a unified plan that addresses student housing issues and which provides resources for academic initiatives. A plan for making better use of our instructional spaces was presented by Vice Provost Rebecca Stoltzfus (Undergraduate Education).

December. A resolution in support of making Cornell a Sanctuary campus was passed. The academic calendar committee presented a “half time report” on its activities.

February. An update on curriculum review in Arts and Sciences was provided. The President and Provost led a discussion about developments in Washington and how they may effect higher education in general and Cornell in particular.

March. A new major in Environment and Sustainability was approved. A resolution passed supporting the idea that the Cornell Academic Calendar recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Vice President Joel Malina (University Relations) discussed Cornell’s presence in Washington and how his office can help faculty who have policy ideas that they would like to promote. There were presentations on classroom technology systems and the central syllabus project.

April. There were two meetings due to the volume of business. The first meeting involved presentations by Senior Vice Provost Barb Knuth on financial aid and Vice President Paul Streeter on how the budget model prescribes teaching-related allocations. The report of the Academic Calendar Committee was presented at the second meeting. A resolution supporting Cornell Leadership in Honesty and Reliable Knowledge was passed.

May. The final discussion of the three academic calendar options took place. A resolution supporting a proactive stance on academic freedom was passed.

Selected Faculty Honors and Awards

It has been a tumultuous, high-anxiety year. But one thing never changes and that is the greatness of the Cornell faculty. I cannot think of a better way to sum up the year than to relay what some of our most brilliant colleagues have achieved:

Darrell Schlom, the Herbert Fisk Johnson Professor of Industrial Chemistry in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, has been elected a member of the National Academy of Engineering.

Geoffrey W. Coates, the Tisch University Professor in the Department Chemistry and Chemical Biology, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Stephen Coate (Economics), María Cristina García (Molecular Biology and Genetics), Suzanne Mettler (Government), and Fred Schneider (Computer Science) was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Two Weill Cornell Medicine faculty members, Dr. Francis Lee and Dr. Jane Salmon, were elected to National Academy of Medicine.

Paulette Clancy, the Bodman Professor of Chemical Engineering, and Heather Kolakowski, lecturer in the School of Hotel Administration, won 2017 Kaplan Family Distinguished Faculty Fellowships.

Kathleen M. Rasmussen (Nutritional Sciences) was recognized by the American Society for Nutrition with the Conrad A. Elvehjem Award for Public Service in Nutrition.

Yimon Aye, assistant professor of chemistry and chemical biology, won the Pershing Square Sohn Prize for Young Investigators in Cancer Research.

Max Zhang, associate professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, won the second annual Engaged Scholar Prize, which recognizes community-based teaching, learning and research.

Assistant professor of English Ishion Hutchinson won the National Book Critics Circle Award for poetry for his 2016 collection "House of Lords and Commons."

Seven assistant professors, representing the colleges of Engineering and Agriculture and Life Sciences, have been recognized with National Science Foundation (NSF) Faculty

Early Career Development Program awards. They are Ludmilla Aristilde (Biological and Environmental engineering), Jacob Bien (Biological Statistics and Computational Biology), Lena Kourkoutis (Applied and Engineering Physics), Andreea Minca (Operations Research and Information Engineering), Perrine Pepiot (Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering), and Meredith Silberstein (Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering), and Christoph Studer (Electrical and Computer Engineering).

Natalie Mahowald (Earth and Atmospheric Science) was selected by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a lead author on a special global warming report.

Jeevak Parpia (Physics) is one of three winners of the 2017 Fritz London Memorial Prize. The prize, administered by Duke University and awarded every three years, recognizes scientists who have made outstanding contributions to the field of low-temperature physics.

Assistant Professors Ilana Brito (Meinig School of Biomedical Engineering), Guillaume Lambert (Applied and Engineering Physics), Kyle Lancaster (Chemistry and Chemical Biology), and Nilay Yapici (Neurobiology and Behavior) have been awarded Sloan Foundation Fellowships, which support early career research and education.

Andrea Simitch (Architecture), Steven Strogatz, the Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Applied Mathematics; and Michael Van Amburgh (Animal Science) were recipients of Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellowships.

Jane Mendle (Human development) and Sara Warner (Performing and Media Arts) are Stephen H. Weiss Junior Fellows.

James Blankenship, senior lecturer in molecular biology and genetics, and Walker White, senior lecturer in computer science) are Stephen H. Weiss Provost's Teaching Fellows.

Margaret Bynoe (Immunology), Carolyn Sevier (Molecular Medicine), and Olena Vatamaniuk (Crop and Soil Sciences) received awards from the Schwartz Research Fund for Women in Life Sciences, endowed by Joan Poyner Schwartz '65 and Ronald H. Schwartz '65. The annual awards support women life scientists conducting innovative, risk-taking research.

Doesn't get any better than that!