


Proposed Resolution:
Inclusion and Prioritization of a
New Natatorium in the
'To Do the Greatest Good'
Capital Campaign

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A blue-tinted photograph of a swimming pool. In the foreground, a rope with several white buoys is visible, extending from the bottom right towards the center. The water is rippled, and the overall scene is dimly lit, creating a somber or urgent atmosphere.

Unless we act now,
Cornell will be without a
functioning pool.

The goal of this resolution is to provide facts on the current state of the pools and implore the administration to act and make a new natatorium a priority.

Who uses the pools at Cornell?

- Physical Education classes
 - beginner, intermediate, and conditioning swimming; diving, scuba diving, lifeguarding, synchronized swimming, and kayaking
- Varsity swimming and diving
- Open swim – students (43%); faculty, staff, retirees (57%)*
- Naval ROTC
- Autonomous underwater vehicle club
- Club swimming
- Club water polo
- Physical therapy
- Group fitness classes – Aqua Fit, Zumba
- Intramural inner tube water polo

Benefits of aquatic exercise

- Physical health
- Mental health
 - Improved self-esteem in college students
 - Preventative measure to combat depression, winter blues, and seasonal affective disorder

[Health Benefits of Water-based Exercise](#), Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Howley, EK. [4 Reasons Why Swimming is Great for Mental Health](#). *U.S. Masters Swimming*. January 6, 2021.

Zhang, Hui, Luo Shi. [Empirical Analysis of the Influence of Swimming Training on Mental Health and Positive Emotions of College Students](#). *Revista Argentina de Clinica Psicologica*; Buenos Aires. Vol 29, Issue 1, 2020: 242.

Muhamad, TA et al. [Effects of Swimming on Self-Esteem among Female College Students](#). *Asian Social Science*. Vol. 9 No. 16; 2013:74-80.

Huttunen P, et al. 2004. [Winter swimming improves general well-being](#). *Int J Circumpolar Health*, 63:2, 140-144.

Cornell Health. Beating the Winter Blues: [A Guide on Getting Through Winter at Cornell](#). October 2019.

Existing pools

- **Teagle Hall** (built 1951)
 - Main pool: 6-lane, 25-yard
 - Diving well integrated into main pool footprint
 - ‘Learn to swim’ pool: 4-lane, 20-yard
 - Originally built as the male-only athletic facility*
- **Helen Newman Hall** (built 1963)
 - 6-lane, 25-yard
 - Originally built as the female-only athletic facility*



*Even with modifications, they have inequitable bathrooms and showers for opposite gender, transgender, and gender non-conforming persons.

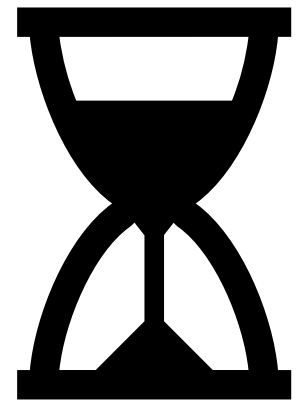
University Assembly Resolution #12 Increasing Access to Gender Neutral Bathrooms on Campus, passed March 2018.

What are the issues?

- Supply < Demand
- Aged, failing facilities
 - Swimming pool turnover rates insufficient for pool usage, contributing to poor water quality
 - Teagle Hall roof replacement needed
- Increased pool closures
- 2020: \$750,000 invested in all pools to prolong their life by ~5 years → 2025
 - Including structural shoring
- Approval, fundraising, planning, construction → up to **10 years**



If started today: → **2032**



Why a 50-meter pool?

- Solve the supply vs. demand issue
- More optimal hours of availability



NY peer institutions

Colgate University



Ithaca College

A Cornell University without a pool...

- Only Ivy League, Non-Ivy Peer, and Regional (New York) college/university without one
- Termination of all aquatic activities previously described, including **Beginning Swimming at Cornell (PE 1100)**
 - People of color: 89.7% of enrolled students (2018 – 2020)
- Participation in formal swimming lessons reduces drowning risk
 - Drowning deaths rates for Black people 1.5x higher than white people
 - Drowning death rates for American Indian or Alaska Native 2-3.5x higher than white people

Beginning Swimming Testimonials

“I left the course gaining a whole new life skill. I had a few traumatic experiences with drowning as a child and never thought that I would be able to learn how to swim.”

“This class was amazing. Not only did she teach me how to swim, but she helped me and my other classmates get over our fear of the water.”

“...provided me with a safe environment to destress while also learning valuable knowledge...”

A Changing Perspective Of The Swim Test

JAIN | Retracting a Former Column

By Akshay Jain

<https://pe.cornell.edu/requirements/changing-perspective-swim-test>

Cornell's 2020 Mental Health Review Final Report

- “culture of competition [that] may take on an unhealthy cycle of expectation and behavior that can reach traumatizing levels for students, faculty, and staff.”
- Section B: Promote social connectedness, and resilience, Opportunities:
 - “It is important to note that when asked for their recommendations, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students consistently prioritized the need for access to free physical fitness opportunities to cope with stress and build resilience. With Ithaca’s climate, students want free and convenient indoor fitness options.”
- Recommendation B.2.2 under Wellbeing
 - “Prioritize fundraising for free physical fitness under Affordability within the capital campaign.”
- “Virtual fitness classes” and “virtual and augmented reality” proposed in lieu of a fitness center

“To Do the Greatest Good”

- A new natatorium would do **an enormous amount of good** benefitting students, faculty, staff, and retirees
- Despite talks of a new pool at Cornell since the 1980s and pools that could fail at any time, a new natatorium is still not a University priority item and is not included in the capital campaign
- Capital campaign only way to prevent Cornell from having to pay for the entire project
- Need to reach major donors across all of Cornell with the assistance of Alumni Affairs and Development

Faculty Senator Co-Sponsors (n=13)

- Ashleigh Newman
- Yuval Grossman
- Doug Antczak
- Elizabeth Bunting
- Thomas Bjorkman
- Abigail Cohn
- Kelly Hume
- Carolyn McDaniel
- Thomas Overton
- Itziar Rodriguez de Rivera
- Tracy Stokol
- Joe Wakshlag
- David Zax

- **Faculty Advisory Committee on Athletics and Physical Education**

Proposed Resolution

Whereas, the pools in Teagle Hall and Helen Newman Hall (further referred to as “the pools”) serve a large and diverse population of Cornell community members including students, faculty, and staff in endeavors including varsity athletics, physical education classes, aquatic-based physical therapy, clubs – both academic and athletic, open lap swimming, ROTC training, and group fitness classes.

Whereas, the pools no longer meet the needs of the Cornell community as detailed above, and have a finite lifespan, which are estimated to end at any time between now and 2025.

Whereas, approving, planning, fundraising, and building a new natatorium can take up to ten years. Cornell University faces the certain reality of having no operational pool on its campus.

Whereas, Cornell University has long valued swimming as an important life skill to prevent fatal unintentional drowning, as demonstrated by its graduation requirement for all undergraduate students to swim 75 yards.

Whereas, providing an inviting, modern, safe, and accessible environment for aquatic activities provides Cornell students, faculty, and staff the ability to exercise year-round, which is a proven positive contributor to mental health.

Whereas, recommendation B.2.2 of the Cornell University Mental Health Review Final Report reads, “Prioritize fundraising for free physical fitness under Affordability within the capital campaign.”

Whereas, we recognize there are many needs of the University, it would be in the University’s best interest to serve those that are of the most imminent need to its community.

Be it resolved, that the Faculty Senate implore the administration to include and prioritize a new natatorium to the list of fundraisings items donors may directly contribute to in Cornell University’s ‘To Do the Greatest Good’ capital campaign.

Be it further resolved, that a new natatorium should be of sufficient size and quality to meet the current and future needs of the Cornell community. To help ensure this, the planning needs to involve Cornell leaders with knowledge and expertise in this area including the Directors of Athletics, Aquatics, Physical Education, Recreational Services, and Head Varsity Swimming Coaches.