Search for the
Dean, Faculty of Computing and Information Science
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

The Search

Cornell University seeks a visionary leader with proven strategic and collaborative skills to serve as the next dean of the Faculty of Computing and Information Science (CIS). This individual will have the opportunity to lead a globally renowned and pioneering (founded two decades ago) computer and information science unit that emerged early in the technology era as the home of innovation, invention, entrepreneurship, and world-class scholarship and education. CIS continues to have deep impact across the university and the dean will join at a time of particularly strong momentum. The opportunity for ongoing program expansion, significant faculty growth, and infrastructure development under the next dean’s tenure will shape the future of the unit for decades.

Reporting to the provost, the dean will serve as the chief academic officer of CIS and set a strategic vision for the rapidly growing unit, with primary oversight of three highly-ranked departments that make up CIS: computer science, information science, and statistics and data science. CIS is incredibly interdisciplinary with faculty and students in related departments across multiple colleges and two Cornell campuses in Ithaca and New York City. The dean will support faculty in advancing CIS’s research and scholarship while furthering its excellence in education. The next leader of CIS will focus on advancing research productivity and funding, recruiting and empowering talented faculty and staff, ensuring an excellent student experience, and nurturing vital relationships across the university. This individual will also play a public leadership role with a variety of stakeholders and attract resources to further the mission of CIS. The dean should demonstrate a keen understanding of preparing the next generation of leaders in the changing STEM environment and have a demonstrated commitment to diversity.

CIS seeks an entrepreneurial leader with an outstanding record of scholarship who possesses the imagination and drive to continue CIS on its impressive trajectory. The dean should be an excellent listener, communicator, and delegator who can seize Cornell’s collaborative culture and deepen partnerships across the university and beyond.
Cornell has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist with this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

**Cornell University**

Cornell University is a remarkable community of scholars, educators, students, staff, and alumni who are deeply influenced by proud traditions and a set of cherished founding principles. Unique among its Ivy League peers, Cornell is a private university with a land-grant mission. It is a world-class research institution known for the breadth and rigor of its curricula, and an academy dedicated to preparing young people to be well-educated and well-rounded citizens of the world. Cornell’s faculty, staff, and students believe in the critical importance of knowledge—both theoretical and applied—as a means of improving the human condition and solving the world’s problems. It embraces traditional liberal arts education, practical applications of knowledge, and interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to research and teaching. It champions free and open intellectual inquiry and expression, treats all individuals with dignity and respect, celebrates difference and diversity, and remains open and accessible to all who meet its high academic standards.

The collaborative culture and interdisciplinary character of the university are critical to its success and its future. Faculty forge novel partnerships where unexpected integrations of deep expertise point the way toward the solutions of tomorrow. The university fuels this through initiatives that elevate “radical collaboration” across disciplines and academic units. Current areas of emphasis include nanoscale science and molecular engineering, genome biology, data science, sustainability, the social sciences, infection biology, and the humanities and arts.

Today, Cornell University consists of 15 schools and colleges. Across the Ithaca campus, the Weill Cornell Medicine campuses in New York City and Qatar, and the Cornell Tech campus in New York City, the university enrolls nearly 15,000 undergraduates and over 8,000 graduate and professional school students. Cornell employs some 8,400 staff and 1,700 professorial faculty members in Ithaca and at Cornell Tech and an additional 5,000 staff and 1,700 faculty members at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City.

Cornell’s financial condition is strong with a balanced budget, growing endowment, and an enviable history of attracting philanthropy and research funding. The university’s operating budget is approximately $4.8 billion, of which 53% supports the Ithaca campus, 46% supports Weill Cornell Medicine, and the remaining one percent supports Cornell Tech. The university’s investment portfolio value is close to $7.3 billion as of October 2019.

Cornell is a highly selective university, able to choose from among the very best applicants in the nation and the world. The university’s eight undergraduate schools and colleges admitted 5,330 students from over 49,114 applications received for the Class of 2023. Of those admitted first-year students, 49% self-identify as students of color and 430 are first-generation college students.
Computing and Information Science

Cornell has long been the national leader in fusing technology education and research with other fields of study as wide-ranging as psychology and economics. Computing and Information Science, a college-level unit that today spans traditional college boundaries, was created with the mission of bringing computing technology into every discipline. The result has been the melding of two separate intellectual and practical approaches—the technical and the social—in ways that result in innovative, creative solutions to complicated problems. Today, CIS comprises three complementary departments: computer science, information science, and statistics and data science, with undergraduate and graduate programs in Ithaca and graduate programs offered on the Cornell Tech campus in New York City. The computer science program is ranked sixth by U.S. News and World Report. CIS is housed in Bill and Melinda Gates Hall, a $60 million, 100,000-square-foot building with an impressive steel and glass exterior designed by architect Thom Mayne and dedicated by Bill Gates in 2014. Given its impressive trajectory and growth over the years, the university is placing a high priority on and is committed to building a second home for CIS. The new building will be adjacent to Gates Hall, with a physical presence to produce collaboration and support continued growth.

CIS is home to 62 tenured and tenure-track faculty and an additional 10 teaching faculty who are valued colleagues in fulfilling our teaching mission. Faculty belong to the three home departments of CIS but collaborate closely with and hold tenure in other colleges and schools across the university. Most CIS and Cornell Tech faculty members are tenured in the Colleges of Engineering and Arts and Sciences. CIS collaborates across the university’s colleges and schools for a unique interdisciplinary approach to teaching and research. Close collaborators include the College of Engineering, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), and the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR).

This position is among the primary deans overseeing the technical disciplines at Cornell Tech in New York City. The relationship between CIS and Cornell Tech is deeply interwoven. Cornell Tech originated out of New York City’s Applied Sciences Competition held by the Bloomberg Administration in 2010. Cornell University, in partnership with Technion, won this audacious venture to create a new institution that would generate new businesses, grow the technical workforce, and stimulate research that would accelerate New York’s emergence as the world’s next great high-tech hub. Cornell Tech was awarded 12 acres on Roosevelt Island and $100 million in City funds toward the construction of a new graduate-only campus without departments that would develop distinctive interdisciplinary and applied programs. CIS faculty members and its programs are active on the Cornell Tech campus and approximately half of Cornell Tech’s faculty are affiliated with CIS. A number of CIS professional master’s programs are currently offered at Cornell Tech, and all of CIS’s core PhD courses span both campuses, administered through CIS. Through these programs, Cornell Tech graduate students combine rigorous academic studies with direct engagement in commercial and societal issues.

CIS’s research reputation is world-renowned in critical computing fields—from machine learning to human-computer interaction, robotics to security and tech ethics. Faculty in each department participate in a number of research efforts that translate across the university and fields of study. Total research expenditures in FY19 were $15.1 million, up from $12.2 million just two years ago. The research at CIS is strengthened by a number of Cornell’s interdisciplinary centers,
institutes, laboratories, and programs that provide cutting-edge infrastructure for scholars and investigators and serve as focal points for collaboration on research, teaching, and outreach across the campus. Current institutes and initiatives providing research and educational opportunities for CIS faculty and students include Computational Social Sciences; the Cornell-R4 Institute for Applied AI; the Center for the Interface of Networks; Computation & Economics (CINCE); Cloud Computing @ Cornell; the Game Design Initiative at Cornell (GDIAC); IC3 - The Initiative For Cryptocurrencies & Contracts; the Institute for Computational Sustainability; the Cornell-Princeton Center for Network Programming; the Program of Computer Graphics; the Cornell Initiative for Digital Agriculture; and Artificial Intelligence, Policy and Practice.

CIS has doubled its enrollment in the last five years and is now home to 1,642 undergraduate students, 340 professional master's students, and 293 Ph.D. students. The undergraduate and Ph.D. programs are near gender parity. CIS is deeply committed to diversity and values differences, recognizing that multiple perspectives enhance creativity. CIS offers a variety of student groups, programming, and forums that focus on supporting diversity in every sense of the word. Notable student groups include Women in Computing at Cornell (WICC), Underrepresented Minorities in Computing (URMC), and Cornell LGBTQ+ in Computing and Information Science. Student groups are active and work with a variety of corporate partners across the nation that support their efforts. CIS also offers two summer programs: the SoNIC Workshop, a summer program for minority undergraduates across the country to study advanced computer networking; and Social Impact Summer School, a summer school for rising college seniors and graduate students focused on science and technology, technology design, and the arts, to which minority students are strongly encouraged to apply.

More information about Cornell University and CIS can be found at https://www.cornell.edu/ and https://cis.cornell.edu/.

The Role

Reporting to the provost, the dean serves as the chief academic and executive officer of Cornell CIS, empowering faculty, ensuring student success, leading staff, and representing CIS within the university and in the broader world. The dean also serves as a key institutional leader and as a member of the university’s leadership team, expected to collaborate closely with fellow deans. The dean promotes a culture of innovation and excellence within the college and fosters collaboration across the university and with key external partners.

The dean sets the vision and strategic direction and has considerable autonomy to execute on strategic priorities for CIS, including primary responsibility for a $88 million annual operating budget. In collaboration with other deans, most notably the deans of the College of Engineering, Cornell Tech, Arts & Sciences, and CALS, the dean has the opportunity to recruit exceptional scholars into a dynamic and growing STEM environment at Cornell and to shape the future of one of the most powerful combinations of intellectual resources at the intersection of data science and technology. In addition, the dean is the chief steward of relationships with the college's alumni base and with industry partners to bolster support and opportunities for scholars, students, and graduates.
The dean oversees department chairs for the three academic units as well as directors of several institutes. Direct reports to the dean include the associate dean for diversity and inclusion, associate dean for administration, and assistant dean for alumni affairs and development in computing and information science.

**Opportunities and Challenges for the Dean**

The primary opportunities and challenges for the next dean will include the following:

**Build on CIS’s strengths and momentum as an innovator and leader in the field**

CIS and its mission to have real-world impact have never been better positioned. Faculty in CIS have produced innovative research in recent years, and CIS has seen explosive growth in undergraduate and graduate program interest. The dean must articulate clear priorities and develop a long-range plan for how CIS will continue to grow, flourish, and pursue cutting-edge thematic areas, leveraging its many areas of strength. The dean will work with Cornell leadership to address space constraints and provide the facilities and resources to support the ongoing success of CIS faculty, students, and staff. The dean will work with faculty and department heads to recruit new faculty, energize new research and education initiatives, take calculated risks, invest in new research areas, and keep pushing the frontiers of science.

**Promote and support the intellectual work of CIS**

CIS's success stems in large part from its collaborative culture that provides faculty with the freedom and flexibility to pursue the most promising areas of inquiry. The dean must come to understand, respect, and value those aspects of the CIS and Cornell culture, working closely with faculty to support their creative aspirations. Being present, listening intently to faculty and their needs, and building community across a diverse unit are critical facets of the role. As the faculty body grows, the dean will pay special attention to fostering a cohesive and collaborative environment. The dean must also be an exceptional recruiter, attracting outstanding and diverse talent to CIS, and in a highly competitive field, developing innovative hiring policies for joint appointments and relationships with companies that reflect and capitalize on the increasingly seamless boundaries between academia and industry in the 21st century.

**Support the educational mission**

The quality of the students is integral to the success of CIS. As demand and enrollment have grown, the dean needs to ensure that CIS has the resources to advance its educational mission and that the culture continues to focus on student success. The dean will support excellence and forward thinking in curriculum and instruction. A top priority will be to build administrative support for students and their pursuit of knowledge at CIS.

**Manage a large and complex enterprise and build organizational capacity**

CIS has grown considerably in recent years, and the dean will oversee the continued development of administrative structures and processes that support the continuing expansion
of CIS. The dean will have the opportunity to assess the current operational needs and reorganize the dean’s office to ensure efficient and effective services. The dean will be thoughtful with respect to the nature and pace of change, recognizing that certain structures and processes may need to be revised or reconsidered to accommodate the shift in scale and properly facilitate the desired growth. The dean manages considerable financial resources and must ensure that they are directed to the most critical academic priorities. The dean will also work with a talented and dedicated staff and must further develop a high-performing team to provide the services and support commensurate with a top program. Nurturing teamwork, promoting transparency, and understanding how organizational structures can support mission and vision are critical responsibilities of the dean.

**Stimulate interdisciplinary partnerships and participate as a member of Cornell's leadership team**

The dean will be a leader for the university, working strategically and collegially with peer deans and university administration to champion initiatives that will continue Cornell's stature and prominence. The dean will inherit exciting joint initiatives with other units but will also have an opportunity to build new collaborations. The CIS dean will join new deans in Engineering and CALS, along with recently appointed deans at Cornell Tech and Arts and Sciences. With this new cadre of leaders and strong deans in Cornell’s others schools and colleges, these leaders will have an opportunity to build a whole greater than the sum of their parts. There is tremendous potential to further leverage partnerships within and outside the university to catalyze new research and education initiatives across departments and schools.

**Continue and accelerate progress in enhancing diversity and inclusion**

The new dean will continue and expand CIS's efforts to build diversity—in all its forms—by launching creative programs to recruit diverse faculty, students, and staff; by focusing on retention efforts for women and underrepresented minorities; and by fostering a culture in which all faculty, students, and staff are welcomed, valued, and supported. The dean will meet regularly with student and faculty groups to ensure support is available for all levels in CIS.

**Represent CIS externally, lead fundraising efforts, and ensure that CIS is recognized for its impact**

The dean has the opportunity to broadcast the pioneering work at CIS to a growing audience. Serving as the chief representative for CIS, the dean will elevate the visibility of CIS, work to engage key federal funding agencies, and connect CIS faculty with industry partners locally, nationally, and internationally. With Cornell preparing for its next capital campaign, the dean will have ample opportunity to build momentum and interest in CIS, most notably for a new CIS building. With CIS’s rapid growth over the past six years, it is expected this next dean will be the lead fundraiser and advocate for the additional space needed for sustained growth. The dean will steward relationships with principal donors while continuing to invest in infrastructure to advance the communication and alumni relations functions that are critical to bringing in new resources.
Professional and Personal Qualifications

To build on this foundation of strength, CIS seeks a bold leader with ambitious vision, a collegial leadership style, and the energy to inspire the community. Candidates should demonstrate significant leadership in a large, highly complex enterprise. While no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, Cornell seeks candidates with the following qualifications and abilities:

- An intellectual leader; a distinguished teacher, scholar, entrepreneur, or innovator; an earned doctorate and a distinguished record of research impact;
- A demonstrated track record of enhancing diversity and inclusion and bringing creative strategies to addressing the challenges of recruiting and retaining underrepresented minorities and women in STEM;
- A keen sense of the trends and developments in global science and evidence of supporting and growing large-scale research programs;
- A demonstrated passion for students and a commitment to excellence in teaching and student success;
- An experienced administrator commensurate with experience as a department chair, associate dean, or dean, and a track record of administrative accomplishments;
- Proven ability to recruit superb researchers and educators;
- An astute understanding of academic finances and experience establishing budget priorities and serving as a responsible steward of resources;
- A consultative leadership style; an excellent collaborator who can partner with other deans and administrators, faculty, staff, and students;
- Established connections to industry and the ability to create opportunities for faculty and students with corporate partners;
- An exceptional communicator who can inspire internal and external constituencies to attract partners and raise funds and support;
- Ability and eagerness to serve as a public intellectual on behalf of the college and the field of computer and information sciences;
- Well-honed problem solving skills;
- Ability to instill trust and confidence in others; and a record that demonstrates the highest degree of integrity, honesty, and fairness.

To Apply

Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent in strict confidence to:

Kate Barry, Partner
Ashton Lange, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller
www.imsearch.com/7303
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Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University’s heritage. Cornell is a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.