



**INAUGURAL DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITABLE FUTURES
CORNELL UNIVERSITY
ITHACA, NEW YORK**

***“I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study.”
- Ezra Cornell***

THE SEARCH

Cornell University seeks a visionary and highly collaborative leader and accomplished scholar to be the Inaugural Director of the Center for Racial Justice and Equitable Futures. The Director will work to develop and implement an ambitious vision for the Center’s future and its commitment to path-breaking research. The new role provides an extraordinary opportunity to contribute to one of the world’s great research universities, by serving as a leading voice on race, racism, indigeneity, and racialization across a wide range of scholarship.

This is a unique opportunity to engage an institution that has fully embraced the three-part mission of a land-grant university: education, research, and outreach, creating academic programs that address real-world issues while building on a traditional liberal arts foundation. As a land-grant, coeducational, and secular university with a broad curriculum and diverse student population, Cornell is an institution of higher learning that has combined classical education with instruction in practical skills. In an effort to live up to its founding aspiration of being “an institution where any person can find instruction in any study,” Cornell seeks to make a significant investment in scholarship in the area of racial justice through the development of the Center.

The Director will work collaboratively with faculty affiliates, deans, center and program directors, and university administration to promote Cornell’s research and education mission. Together with departments and colleges, the Director will participate in the hiring and retention of diverse faculty and serve as a visionary for the study of race within and beyond their own discipline, seeking opportunities to connect innovative research with external resources.

The Center will serve as a central node connecting and amplifying scholarship on racism, indigeneity, ethnicity, and bias across Cornell University. For the center to be successful, the Director must ensure that the scholarship of the center is firmly grounded in Cornell’s academic programs.

Cornell has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

BACKGROUND & THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Following student and alumni activism to advance anti-racism initiatives and actions at Cornell in the summer of 2020, President Martha Pollack announced a set of actions to amplify Cornell's existing scholarship to promote racial justice. One of these action items was a proposal to create a center that would strengthen Cornell's research, scholarship, and education commitment to the exploration of systems and structures that perpetuate racism and inequality, and the development of policies and interventions to combat them. President Pollack's directive to develop plans for such a center, along with various educational programs, was, in one sense, prompted by the nationwide protests that followed the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others. Black student activism at Cornell on these occasions was but the most recent reminder to the campus of the impacts of structural racism and systemic bias and of the institution's pressing obligation to address these issues through education and research.

A working group of the university's faculty senate consisting of a diverse group of faculty and students across the disciplines was subsequently charged with developing a proposal for the center. The resulting proposal envisioned a permanent, institutionally supported unit seeking to understand, through interdisciplinary research and external engagement, the many interlocking forms of racism and bias that are directed at Black American, Indigenous, LatinX, Asian American, and other marginalized and targeted peoples within the United States' context.

THE CENTER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITABLE FUTURES

The Center will boost Cornell's existing scholarship on the historical and current impacts of inequality, further strengthening Cornell's research and education on systems and structures that perpetuate racism and inequality, and on policies and interventions that break that cycle. Cornell already has outstanding academic units and faculty that address these critical issues, including the Africana Studies and Research Center, the American Indian and Indigenous Studies program (AIISP), Latina/o Studies, and Asian American Studies, as well as programs within American, Jewish, Near Eastern, and Feminist Gender and Sexuality studies, and centers such as the Center for the Study of Inequality, the Cornell Center for Health Equity, the Program in Ethics and Public Life, and the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability, as well as others that are not listed but contribute valuable scholarship.

The Center is envisioned as a central node connecting and amplifying scholarship on racism, indigeneity, ethnicity, bias, and racial equity currently distributed across a university-wide network of 25+ related units and beyond. Potential collaborations with relevant University programs and disciplines, including the Cornell University Library, David M. Einhorn Center for Community Engagement, the Botanic Gardens, and the Johnson Art Museum, among others, speak to the Center's goal to effect change off campus through research and teaching on campus. The Director should also seek potential partnerships and areas of synergy with various Colleges/Schools such as the new Brooks School of Public Policy, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, College of Arts & Sciences, College of Human Ecology, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Cornell's Cooperative Extension (CCE) to pursue economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. The vision is to ensure that the institution is a national leader in this critical area.

The Center should amplify and support rigorous scholarship, engaged research, performance, art, and design to build a community of scholars and students capable of generating and analyzing visions of ethical alternative futures. The Center should be innovative in how it engages students and faculty across campus through new forms and modes of collaboration. It must advance the understanding of the structural and systemic character of forms of racialization, and the ways in which the history of white supremacy in the United States has enforced social division and inequalities. In addition, the Center's cultivation of interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement should provide opportunities to forge new intellectual and social bonds.

THE ROLE

Cornell University seeks a leading scholar with a track record of scholarly distinction and administrative success as well as an inclination and talent for collaboration as its Inaugural Director for the Center for Racial Justice and Equitable Futures. The Inaugural Director should have a genuine attraction to the mission and unique culture of the University, thriving in its atmosphere of vigorous inquiry. The Director will be responsible for leading a Provost's initiative for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty with research interests of the center in partnership with deans and other stakeholders within the University; convening and leading those affiliated with the Center and managing the administrative structures necessary to support scholarship and other activities aligned with the Center's mission. The Director will guide staff responsible for the Center's academic and programmatic efforts, aligned with the long-term strategic goals of the Center and the academic culture of the university. The Director will lead meaningful engagement and intersection with several of the University's area studies and centers and will have an appetite to serve various constituents. A successful candidate will foster internal and external relationships and be responsive to new opportunities, particularly with academic departments and college leaders. They will collaborate with faculty and students to enhance the curriculum and support future academic leaders in this area.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Develop and implement an inspiring strategic vision for the Center

The Inaugural Director will be a bold and visionary builder and will develop a forward-looking mission and scholarly agenda for the new Center. With dedicated resources and support from the President and Provost, the Director will work with colleagues across Cornell to co-create and implement a strong mission and vision for the Center to further enhance the research and scholarship on topics of racial justice in the context of the United States. A successful candidate will be an entrepreneurial academic, deeply committed to public engagement and to creating a transformative center that recognizes and uplifts the value of existing centers and individuals already doing this important work. The Center should have a commitment to educating the next generation of scholars, providing opportunities to enhance graduate and postdoctoral fellowship programs that draw from varied disciplines, and providing expanded support for undergraduate and graduate students and postdocs with an interest in racial and social justice work.

Support the recruitment & retention of faculty and students interested in the study of racial justice

Cornell is committed to deepening its scholarship in the area broad area of racial justice, increasing the diversity of its faculty, and strengthening the sense of belonging among faculty from diverse backgrounds. The Director will work collaboratively with deans and other stakeholders across the University to recruit and retain faculty engaged in the study of racial justice across a range of scholarly disciplines. In partnership with Deans and other University leaders, the Director will work collaboratively and effectively to discover areas of synergy between the Center and various areas of the University.

Build relationships and create new opportunities for Cornell faculty and students to collaborate and engage in research and scholarship aligned with the Center's mission.

As the Director develops and implements the strategic plan for the Center, they will have the opportunity to engage faculty, the Center's overall research profile, and areas of scholarship in the study of race. The Director will work with faculty to ensure faculty, staff, and scholars are in alignment with the Center's mission to further develop the study of race and ethnicity. They will foster discussions about how the Center's research will contribute on a larger scale. They should expand the interdisciplinary research among faculty and provide impactful programming.

Develop and strengthen partnerships within and beyond the University

The Director will be able to draw upon existing partnerships within the University and the external community to cultivate and enrich the work of the Center and will be expected to proactively seek new opportunities for connections and scholarship. They will work to identify areas within the University that are siloed and strategically work to move past the decentralized structure. They will communicate with a variety of audiences to create excitement about the Center and advocate for building a strong external reputation around its mission. The Director will serve as an influential voice on racial justice and equity and develop programming to initiate dialogue within the Cornell community and beyond. They will work to ensure the Center serves as a connecting point for various communities and the campus at large.

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

The successful candidate will have many of the following professional qualifications, skills, and experiences:

- An established scholar, researcher, and educator appropriate for a faculty appointment with tenure at the rank of full professor; whose scholarship and work is firmly grounded in the goals, ambitions, and programs that define the Center;
- An inspiring administrative leader who understands the role of cross-disciplinary research within the pedagogical and research imperatives of the university, above all its role as a resource for faculty and students interested in the ties between race, ethnicity, and social justice;

- A creative and committed institution builder, who will serve as an influential voice within a diverse community of faculty, staff, students, and community, national, and international partners;
- An excellent communicator and advocate for the work of the Center within the Cornell academic community, as well as the broader external community;
- A demonstrated commitment to advancing a just and inclusive University where all people and communities have an opportunity to succeed through engagement in campus and community initiatives;
- A thoughtful leader capable of leading the development and implementation of a strategic plan within a complex, decentralized institution;
- An effective collaborator who understands intersectionality, and can apply theory to practice;
- A compelling storyteller, who can work with potential partners and funders to demonstrate the value and potential impact of the Institute's work and success in obtaining extramural funding from a variety of sources;
- A community-centered leader, committed to promoting dynamic research and conversation transnationally and across racial and ethnic borders;
- An outstanding advocate and mentor, with experience developing educational programming, and a reputation for advancing the field of racial justice and related disciplines by developing the next generation of scholars;
- An engaged thought leader who can think broadly about the Center's impact on the national and international climate and initiate dialogue on race beyond the university.

TO APPLY

Cornell University has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist the search committee with this important recruitment. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Keight Kennedy, Partner
Karson Freeman, Associate
Alexis Scott, Search Coordinator
<http://www.imsearch.com/8457>
1800 K Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20006

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.

Appendix

ABOUT CORNELL

Founded in 1865 by State Senators Ezra Cornell and Andrew Dickson White, Cornell has been described as the first truly American university because of its founders' revolutionarily egalitarian and practical vision of higher education. Today, in addition to its private, Ivy League identity, the University remains dedicated to its land-grant mission of outreach and public service. The University's total operating budget is approximately \$5.2 billion. In 2021, its investment portfolio was valued at close to \$10 billion.

With its main campus in Ithaca in the scenic Finger Lakes Region of New York, its Medical College campus on Manhattan's Upper East Side, extension offices in every county of New York State, and educational programs around the world, Cornell's physical reach mirrors the breadth of its academic and service offerings. An ambitious and talented faculty, a rigorously selected student body, a dedicated and hardworking staff, and a large and loyal alumni body energize the University.

Cornell University is a large and complex institution. It maintains a critical distinction between contract (with New York State funding) and endowed colleges, promotes both applied and basic research, cultivates interaction between two major campuses, and works globally. The founders' broad educational vision and the combination of private and public resources required to support its three missions have produced a system of decentralized administrative structures and rich intellectual diversity. They are the source of Cornell's greatest strength.

Cornell comprises 16 schools and colleges: nine undergraduate units and four graduate and professional units in Ithaca, 2 medical graduate and professional units in New York City, and one in Doha, Qatar. Cornell has composed a unique academic experience from an extraordinary array of schools and programs across many colleges.

The University offers 80 undergraduate majors, more than 120 undergraduate minors, and 102 graduate fields of study, on campuses in Ithaca, New York; New York City; and Doha, Qatar. The University enrolls nearly 15,000 undergraduates and over 8,000 graduate and professional students. Twenty percent of these students are international in origin, representing over 120 countries. Cornell employs some 8,100 staff and 1,600 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.

The University is governed by a 64-member Board of Trustees, which includes representatives from the faculty, students, staff, alumni, and New York State. Cornell is one of relatively few institutions in the United States where the campus community directly elects constituent members to its highest governing body. Students are elected to serve two-year terms, while faculty and staff are elected for four-year terms, all as full voting members on the Board.

For more information, visit <https://www.cornell.edu/about/>.

LEADERSHIP

President

Martha E. Pollack is the fourteenth president of Cornell University and a professor of computer science, information science, and linguistics. She took office on April 17, 2017.

As the only land-grant university in the Ivy League, Cornell combines the highest standards of teaching and research with a public mission to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge. President Pollack is committed to building upon Cornell's academic distinction and unique strengths, investing in the creativity and experience of our exceptional faculty while also enhancing our culture of "educational verve" through new, evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning. She sees Cornell's foundational commitment to diversity and equity as central to our identity and success and has engaged the entire university in the work of building an open, inclusive community whose members communicate effectively across differences. In her leadership of Cornell's many units and campuses, she works to cultivate productive and meaningful synergies across disciplines and geographies, realizing a vision of "One Cornell" that capitalizes on the complementary strengths of our urban and rural identities.

An expert in artificial intelligence with a research focus on natural-language processing, automated planning, and the design of assistive technology for people with cognitive impairment, President Pollack earned a bachelor's degree in linguistics at Dartmouth College and an M.S. and Ph.D. in computer and information science at the University of Pennsylvania. She was previously provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Michigan, where she was also a professor of computer science and information.

Provost

Michael I. Kotlikoff, professor of molecular physiology, became the 16th provost of Cornell on August 1, 2015. As the university's chief academic officer, chief budgeting officer, and first deputy officer to the president, he works to enhance the university's excellence in teaching, scholarship, and outreach.

His signature initiative, Radical Collaboration, recruits faculty and supports infrastructure in seven key multidisciplinary areas: nanoscale science and microsystems engineering, genome biology, data science, sustainability, digital agriculture, infection biology and the critical inquiry into values, and imagination and culture (CIVIC). Kotlikoff has also initiated efforts to invest in academic and student housing facilities, re-evaluate curricula and implement effective academic technologies, as well as develop policies to facilitate greater faculty diversity and dual-career hiring across the colleges.

Kotlikoff was previously the Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell (2007–2015). He enhanced programs in education, animal health care, and research and launched an \$87 million capital project to upgrade infrastructure and teaching facilities and enable an increase in the pre-clinical class size. Prior to becoming dean, he was founding chair of the Department of Biomedical Sciences and chair of the Mammalian Genomics Life Science Initiative.

Kotlikoff's research laboratory, continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health for over 30 years, including during his tenure as dean and provost, is internationally recognized in the area of cardiovascular biology and heart repair.

Kotlikoff received his B.A. (literature) and V.M.D. degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and his Ph.D. in physiology from the University of California, Davis.