Engaged Cornell and The Cornell Commitment

This Fall, President David Skorton unveiled Engaged Cornell, a $150 million initiative designed to transform education at Cornell and position the university as a leader in community engagement. The program, started by an initial $50 million grant from the Einhorn Family Charitable Trust, plans to spend the next ten years developing community-university partnerships in Ithaca and New York State, across the country and around the world.

By 2025, Engaged Cornell’s goal is to have every student involved in community-based learning and research, with programs specifically tailored to each major and minor. Grants are being offered to faculty members across all colleges and departments to develop courses that will engage students in these types of community learning. Through this initiative, students will be able to take theories learned in the classroom and put them to practice solving real problems.

Another aspect of Engaged Cornell is Leadership for the Greater Good, an engaged-learning leadership development program that students may opt to participate in, regardless of college or program. Students will be able to cultivate leadership skills that will allow them to be forerunners in the next generation of leaders.

“Engaged Cornell will enable students to build relationships with people in different places and from different backgrounds while affecting real change.” -Cheryl Einhorn ’91

(Continues on p11)
Alumni Help Others Unearth the World

Engagement does not end as an alumnus. Kat Pisco and Tradition Alumnus Mike Pisco share their engaged work in our alumni spotlight. The Piscos recently launched their social enterprise Unearth the World, an organization promoting service-learning by pairing volunteers with international non-profits.

How do you occupy your time these days?
K: Running our social enterprise Unearth the World! And, of course, traveling as much as I can. I knew that running a business would be time consuming but I had no idea the reality of it. It is amazing to be able to work doing something I am passionate about so - as trite as it sounds - it rarely feels like work. Mike and I still do quite a bit of travel both professionally (Peru last fall and Nicaragua in the spring) and personally (we recently spent time in Sonoma, California and Charleston).

What benefits do you believe that people receive from volunteering in a foreign country?
K & M: We think that people who participate in international volunteer travel or some form of cultural exchange have the capability of becoming better humans, stronger leaders and global citizens! We grew more personally and professionally in our travel and volunteer experiences abroad over 9 months than we had in the previous 9 years. We learned how to better deal with stress and anxiety, communicate more effectively, and thrive in uncomfortable situations. All of these skills can translate into any post-college career. At Unearth the World, we provide in-depth support pre-, during- and post- trip to ensure that our travelers maximize these benefits and are truly able to engage in the world around them. The cross cultural immersion is extremely valuable for both our volunteers and the host communities.

What are the challenges of running an organization with programs in several different countries?
K & M: So many! There are the obvious challenges of navigating different cultures, languages and time zones. But it is also challenging to maintain a deep relationship with our international nonprofit partners without physically being there every day. It is also difficult to control the quality of our volunteer experience when we are in multiple countries. To address these concerns, Mike and I visit, vet and volunteer with each of our partners and maintain close communication with them.

(Continues on p10)

Interested in sharing your alumni story?
Contact BJ Siasoco (bj.siasoco@cornell.edu)
Cornell Commitment Service Trip to Honduras

Service on a local to local level, that’s how the Cornell Commitment partnered with Mayor Potencial for its first international service trip. Before the start of the spring 2015 semester, 12 Cornell Commitment students traveled with staff member BJ Siasoco ’07, to El Rodeito, Honduras, to assist the local elementary school with math and English instruction.

The partnership began when Mayor Potencial’s founder, Cornell staff member Nancy Bell, and Siasoco met at an Employee Assembly retreat. Mayor Potencial was looking for an organization who could pilot a small group student exchange and The Cornell Commitment was looking for a local partner with similar goals. Bell’s family is from El Rodeito and she founded Mayor Potencial because she wanted the children of the village to have opportunities like hers and for the situation there to have increased visibility in the U.S. The organization’s mission is to elevate educational standards and facilities in order to provide better opportunities for future generations in rural schools in Latin America. The Commitment students piloted activities to support those goals.

Honduran national education standards include requirements for English instruction, however, none of the teachers at the Ramón Rosa school in El Rodeito speak English. The service trip will occurred right before elementary classes began so the Commitment students helped the Honduran students with English and math games to help build excitement for the start of the school year.

As a part of the program’s focus to support local organizations and provide engaged learning experiences, students will be living with a local host family and cooking communal meals.

Asked why she was interested in the trip, Meinig Student Lavannya Pulluvett il Barrera ’17 said “This volunteer trip to Honduras appealed to me specifically for a lot of reasons. First, I immediately connected with Nancy Bell’s story about growing up in a poor rural area and struggling to continue her education. I became especially interested in joining this trip when Nancy mentioned that in Honduras, young girls are less likely to further their education because there is less invested in them than there is in males. As someone who tries to actively fight for female recognition and advancement in her daily life, I found myself getting worked up over the lack of resources made available to women in rural Honduras. The disparity in resources is an issue that needs to be addressed and I would like to be a part of the team that works to do so.”

Before departing, Commitment students participated in a critical reflection session co-facilitated by Engaged Learning + Research. By meeting other students engaged in similar work over winter break, students were able to share and begin to critically reflect on their experiences.

We are excited to provide this opportunity for our students and see it grow!

To learn more about Mayor Potencial visit:

www.mayorpotencial.org
Adapted from Cornell Chronicle and Cornell Daily Sun (Anne Ju and Zoe Ferguson)

Everything outside the classroom that defines the Cornell student experience – from athletics, to public service, to residential life, to health and well-being – Susan H. Murphy ’73, Ph.D. ’94, has shepherded all of it for more than 20 years.

Vice president for student and academic services since 1994, Murphy has announced she will retire June 30, 2015. She will remain at Cornell in a new role in the Division of Alumni Affairs and Development, assisting with fundraising and alumni engagement, through June 2016.

“I’m not sure I could go from the pace of life that is inherent in being a vice president to doing ... nothing,” Murphy said. “I am grateful for the opportunity to work with alumni affairs and development on key fundraising priorities during my transition.”

Murphy has served as an executive mentor for the Meinig Scholars program, regularly meeting with students and inviting them into her home. Alumni from her mentoring group described her as a “compassionate” and “involved” mentor.

Jordana Gilman ’14, a mentee from 2011 to 2014, said Murphy “genuinely cares” about student life.

“Murphy has been at the center of student life at Cornell for so many years and has been an incredible resource, ally and inspiration for students,” Gilman said. “She genuinely cares about students and our goals,” Gilman said.

Without hesitation, Murphy says that working with students – and watching them grow, mature and make an impact in the world – has been her favorite part of her job.

“They are so passionate about what they do, and they make a difference,” she said. “They keep us on our toes as staff members. Sometimes their impatience drives me crazy, but at the heart of it, that’s what they’re supposed to be doing.”

Murphy has taken part in many transformative campus projects, from the creation of a first year North Campus and the house systems on West Campus. She has also advocated for the health and well-being of students – from responding to some of the worst crises imaginable, to becoming a more proactive, caring community.

(Continues on p6)
James is a Human Development major in the College of Human Ecology.

Why did you choose to come to Cornell?
I chose to come to Cornell long before the traditional college applicant—I went to Cornell Summer College the summer in between my junior and senior year and immediately knew that Cornell was the right place for me. The “home away from home” feeling of the campus made me feel that Cornell was the right place for me. The balance of social and academic life really drew me in.

What are some things you are involved with on campus?
I am involved in the Cornell University Ambassadors, the Human Ecology Ambassadors, the Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars Executive Board, and the Psychological Society Yielding Cornell Health Practitioners Executive Board, and the Student’s Onto Scholars Executive Board. I am also a research assistant in Dr. Stephen J. Ceci’s Child Witness and Cognition Lab.

What is your favorite Cornell memory so far?
My favorite Cornell memory is my freshman year convocation. It was very powerful to look out into a sea of students in the class of 2016 and hearing President Skorton speak about the journey ahead of us.

What have you used your support account for?
I used my support account to travel to Bogo City, Philippines to work in Severo Verallo Memorial Hospital. Here, I worked alongside physicians and nurses to help administer care, primarily in the OB-GYN department. I am using the rest of my funds in the near future to travel to Delhi, India. Here, I plan on working with the William Society to teach slum children English and basic healthy lifestyle practice.

One bit of advice for students to do in their underclass years before graduating.
Talk to people out of your comfort zone—learn how to hone relationships with people who are dissimilar from yourself because you can learn a lot from those types of people.

Something you miss from home?
Sunday morning breakfasts with my parents, siblings, and grandparents.

What do you miss from Cornell when you are away?
My friends, the beauty of campus, and the freedom that I will never get again (or so I’m told).

If you had 2 hours to add to the week, what would you spend them doing?
I wish I had 2 extra hours to catch up on current events and world news—not having a TV in my home really makes a difference!

If you could ask alumni any question, what would it be?
If you won the lottery, what would you change in your professional and personal life?

Have an answer to James’ alumni question? Connect with our students on our Meinig LinkedIn Page:
http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Meinig-Family-Cornell-National-Scholars-4741070
Before becoming vice president, Murphy worked for 16 years in admissions and financial aid, including nine as dean. Over the years her service and dedication to Cornell have been recognized in many ways, including an endowment in her name for a Cornell Tradition fellowship and the naming of the Court Hall lobby in her honor.

“I have been so fortunate to have Susan on my senior leadership team,” said Cornell President David Skorton. “Her talent, perceptiveness, innovation and judgment are simply unparalleled. Time and again, I have drawn upon her wisdom and insights, not only on topics that directly affect the student experience, but also on issues related to higher education on a national and even global scale. While Cornell will miss her leadership, the university will be fortunate to have the continuing benefit of her broad experience when she transitions to her Alumni Affairs and Development role next July.”

Skorton launched a national search for Murphy’s successor this fall.
Graham is a Nutritional Science major in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

What are some things you are involved with on campus?
I spent my first semester on campus getting very involved! With Cornell Commitment, I am an administrative assistant in the Commitment Office, and a member of the Tradition Student Advisory Council. I play tuba with the Big Red Marching Band, Big Red Pep Band, and the Cornell Symphony Orchestra. I am an active member of the Cornell University Dietetics Association (CUDA), and I will also get a chance to share my experiences with other transfer students as an Orientation Leader next semester.

What is your favorite Cornell memory so far?
Playing with the Big Red Marching Band has been my favorite part of being a Cornellian so far. One of my favorite moments this semester was at the Homecoming Pep Rally when I got to dance on stage with the other performing groups on campus – while carrying my sousaphone!

What have you loved about the Tradition Program?
I love the Tradition program because it gives support to students that are highly motivated and driven to do great things. There is no need for the program to shape its students into thinkers and leaders – every Tradition student already had those qualities coming into Cornell. What the Tradition program does instead is give its students the opportunities to put their big ideas into big actions and it makes being a part of this program so exciting.

If you’ve used your support account, what for?
I’ve yet to use my support account, but I am already researching ideas for internships and service projects for this coming summer. Between the support account and the Estimated Savings Reimbursement, this will be the first summer I will not feel pressured to stay at home and work to afford the upcoming school year. Because of that, I want to go big! Hopefully through Cornell Tradition I will be able to get involved working or volunteering in healthcare while also being able to travel somewhere new that I’ve never been to before.

Something you miss from home?
I miss my family, my best friends, and my cat! Every time I’m home for break, I make sure to visit my sister at her new apartment, see my brother and my baby nephew, grab lunch with my bestie, and spend plenty of time taking cat naps with Darth Vader.

What do you miss from Cornell when you are away?
I miss all of the wonderful friends I have made when I am away from Cornell. Crazily enough, I miss being busy all of the time too! I get very antsy when I have nothing to do, and so I am always happy when it’s time to come back to the hill.

If you had 2 hours to add to the week, what would you spend them doing?
Sleeping. I don’t sleep nearly enough!

If you could ask alumni any question, what would it be?
How do you continue to incorporate the visions of Ezra Cornell in your current lives? What keeps you connected to the values of the Cornell Commitment after you leave Cornell?

Have an answer to Graham’s alumni question? Connect with our students on our Tradition LinkedIn Page: http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Cornell-Tradition-Fellowship-2427782
Rachel Harmon wins 2015 Rhodes Scholarship

By Joe Zappala (adapted from Cornell News)

Rachel Harmon ‘15 is the recipient of a 2015 Rhodes Scholarship, an international postgraduate award widely regarded as the world’s most prestigious scholarship.

Harmon is one of 32 students selected from a pool of 900 college and university applicants to receive two years of study at the University of Oxford, England, where she will pursue a master’s degree in evidence-based social intervention and policy evaluation.

Rhodes scholars are chosen based on academic achievements, their “commitment to the common good” and leadership potential.

“The Rhodes Scholarship is one of the most extraordinary opportunities available to a soon-to-be college graduate like myself, not only because of the incredible academic and intellectual resources available at Oxford, but also because of the vibrant community that one becomes a part of upon selection,” Harmon said.

“I have been motivated by a desire to further social justice for about as long as I can remember, and the Rhodes Scholarship was intended to facilitate just that – the development of global leaders to contribute to the greater good.”

While studying at the ILR School, Harmon has been involved in research and service activities and has earned academic honors. She is a Public Service Center Scholar, a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, a Rawlings Presidential Research Scholar, an ILR Irving Ives Award winner and a teaching assistant in the Cornell Prison Education Program.

Harmon worked as a Southern Education Leadership Initiative fellow of the Southern Education Foundation in summer 2014, researching the impact of school finance trends with Better Schools, Better Jobs in Jackson, Mississippi. In fall 2013 she conducted independent research in rural Uganda on participation in local governance, interviewing more than 100 residents in five villages.

Her honors thesis will compare labor and community initiatives for low-income families in Mississippi, a region that has interested her since she taught there with the America Reads program the year after high school. In the summer of 2012, she was a research fellow with ILR’s Worker Institute and served as a research assistant for Restaurant Opportunity Center United.

Cornell’s other current Rhodes scholars are Meinig Scholar Kit Dobyns ’13 and Daniel Young ’13, both of whom are in their second year of the scholarship. Students interested in applying for the Rhodes Scholarship can contact Beth Fiori, Cornell fellowships coordinator.
Bryan is a Science of Earth Systems major in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

What are you involved with on campus?
In addition to the Rawlings Cornell Presidential Research Scholars, I am also involved with the Cornell University Men’s Club Ice Hockey Team, Cornell University Roller Hockey team, Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity, and the Cornell Earth and Environmental Systems Field Program in Hawaii, where I spent the spring 2013 semester.

What is your favorite Cornell memory so far?
I find it difficult to determine a single favorite memory, but I would say that my fondest memories from my undergraduate experience include studying in Hawaii, joining Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity, spending time with friends during major campus events (Homecoming, Slope Day), and traveling for research.

What have you loved about the RCPRS program?
The RCPRS program has provided me with research opportunities that I would not have been able to organize and fund on my own. The RCPRS related research experiences that I have had have been life changing. Not only have they enhanced my ability to conduct field work, lab work, and computer based research pertaining to Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, they have helped shape me as a person by broadening my cultural horizons and allowing me to form valuable connections with amazing people from all over the world.

What have you used your support account for?
I have used my support account for two different research opportunities. During the summer of 2013, I used my support account to travel to Missoula, Montana, to conduct hydrology research with the Department of Ecology at the University of Montana. My close childhood friend lives in a cabin in the Lolo National Forest, west of Missoula and the University of Montana, so I stayed with him for the duration of this research. During the summer of 2014, I spent several months in the Republic of Ireland to conduct Coastal Geography research with the Discipline of Geography at the National University of Ireland, Galway. I used my support account to fund travel, living, and food expenses from this research internship. I am still a research intern with the National University of Ireland, Galway, assisting with research from abroad.

If you could ask alumni any question, what would it be?
I would ask them to carefully think about the best possible advice they would have for a senior college student who is struggling to determine what to do after graduation. What would that advice be?
What is the most rewarding part of Unearth the World for you two?
K & M: To us, it is being able to help other people experience international volunteer travel. Our personal experience absolutely changed our lives for the better. Knowing that we can play a positive role in someone else’s life is unbelievable. It is also extremely rewarding to be working towards bettering an industry. We saw so many of the negatives that can occur in volunteer travel so it has felt fantastic to address these problems head on!

What do you love about being an alumnus?
K: Cornell is one of the most interesting, exciting, challenging and beautiful places in the world. Both Mike and I have so much pride in being alums. I love connecting with other alums and current Cornell students in order to share experiences. I also love visiting the campus. Mike and I recently made our first trip back together since we graduated and it was so much fun to relive all the memories.

M: I love expressing the impact that Cornell had on my life - in and out of the classroom - to current students and fellow alumni. It’s easy to take a lot of pride in Cornell and be able to give back in some way to hopefully help or inspire current students. I love being a lacrosse alum as well, which keeps me connected to the school in another way.

What was the biggest change for you post-undergraduate-wise?
K: My biggest change after graduating was no longer having as much structure in my life. For the first time, there was not an obvious “next step”. As a Communications major, there were many directions I could have taken but nothing was screaming out to me. At the time, when I took my first job in sales for E&J Gallo, I was still unsure if it was the right path for me. I had to learn that I would have to trust my gut when making life decisions instead of following the path laid out for me.

M: Life on my own – in a good way. At Cornell, you’re surrounded by classmates and best friends at all times. And everyone has the same goal to do well, have fun and get a good job. Being from Boston and moving out to Chicago after graduation, I didn’t have my normal acquaintances from growing up or college (besides Kat!!). My focus was on starting my own career, affording my own lifestyle, and branching out to meet different types of people. And my experiences at Cornell prepared me for situations like this.

What do you miss most about Cornell?
K: I miss so many things that it is hard to pick one! I miss the physical beauty of the campus, the engaging classes and, of course, my daily ‘Vegetarian’ bagel at Collegetown Bagels. But I think the thing that I miss the most is the community of people that I met while in school. I made some of my best friends during college. And, while I make a point to keep in good touch, I really miss being in the same place with them on a daily basis.

M: Cornell is a special place. I appreciated it a lot when I was there, but I appreciate it even more now that I’ve been gone for almost ten years. I just miss the campus and surrounding areas in general. Having been to many places around the country (and most recently around the world) I’ve realized how beautiful Cornell truly is.

Learn more about Unearth the World at: www.unearththeworld.com
**Engaged Cornell, from page 1**

and innovators. Students who complete the program will also receive a special recognition at graduation.

The Cornell Commitment is excited to be part of the new Engaged Cornell. The three Commitment programs are all actively engaged in the values of work and service, leadership and learning, and research and discovery outside of the classroom. Through Engaged Cornell, these programs will be able to connect students with a greater variety of experiences to impact not only the campus but the greater community. Through support account funding, Commitment students will be able to set the bar for the differences that Cornellians can make when given the chance to work within communities all over the world.

As Cornell University celebrates its 150th anniversary and looks ahead to the future, the institution is still finding new ways to expand on and further develop Ezra Cornell’s vision of “any person, any study.” With Engaged Cornell, the university will be able to reach people through their communities in all corners of the world, and help shape its students into active global citizens, ready to solve problems for years to come.

**Something you miss from home?**
Although I have lived in some amazing places over the past three years, my true home will always be Columbus, Ohio. There is a unique culture in Columbus... people share a common interest in college football, Irish and German heritage (Columbus suburb Dublin and district German Village are seen as hubs of culture and tradition), a struggling professional ice hockey team (Columbus Blue Jackets), and both city and country living. Columbus is the only place where you can go to an 18th century style Amish bakery, a world renowned science museum, the nation’s largest zoo, a farmer’s harvest sale, and the largest college campus in the northern US all in the same day. My family and friends from back home share this unique culture and the benefits of living in an extremely underrated Midwest city... the thing I miss the most is spending time with them.

**What do you miss from Cornell when you are away?**
There’s never a dull moment at Cornell. When I am away, the thing I miss the most is being able to regularly spend time with the close friends I have made who come from completely different backgrounds. Together we’ve shared in the challenges and excitement that come with being an undergraduate student at an extremely well-rated university.

**If you had two hours to add to the week, what would you spend them doing?**
I would spend these two hours playing the guitar or playing ice hockey.

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**RCPRS Student Spotlight, from Page 9**

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Interested in connecting with the Commitment? Here are some ways to keep in touch!

**LinkedIn**
The Cornell Tradition Fellowship LinkedIn Group
http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Cornell-Tradition-Fellowship-2427782
The Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars LinkedIn Group
http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Meinig-Family-Cornell-National-Scholars-4741070
The Rawlings Cornell Presidential Research Scholars LinkedIn Group
http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Rawlings-Cornell-Presidential-Research-Scholars-4588253

LinkedIn is an excellent resource for you to reach out to other alumni to network regarding career and life advice. LinkedIn also provides a place to connect with current students to share your career experiences and opinions regarding life at Cornell and beyond. To maintain the exclusivity of the groups, membership or alumni status in each program is confirmed after you request to join. If you already have a LinkedIn account, you may have already received a pre-approved invitation!

**Facebook**
The Cornell Tradition Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/TheCornellTraditionFellowship
The Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/MeinigFamilyCornellNationalScholars
The Rawlings Cornell Presidential Research Scholars Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/RCPRS

Our Facebook pages contain regular updates to the program, from current events to alumni and student spotlights. We are interested in collecting alumni spotlights from you! To join a Facebook page, all you need is a Facebook account.

**On Campus**
If you ever return to campus, feel free to reach out to us. With advance notice, we can connect you with students, or other campus resources to support your visit. Whether it’s an update on your life/career or a request for information about the program, we’d love to see you while you are in Ithaca!

**Contact Us!**
We hope to grow our alumni programming based on alumni needs and feedback. Past alumni have hosted service projects in their local community or met with students doing internships in their area. If you have suggestions or want to become more involved, please contact us.

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Email: BJ Siasoco (bj.siasoco@cornell.edu)
Phone: 607-255-8595
Recruiting for an internship or job opening?

You can recruit through the Cornell Career Services Office and specify your preference for Commitment students.

Internships and Job Openings

By following the instructions below, you can post openings (free of charge) for current undergraduates or reach alumni with 0 – 5 years work experience. When posting positions, be sure to specify you are looking for Commitment students or students specifically from your program.

To log into the Cornell system visit this website:

https://cornell-students.experience.com/emp/enter_email

1) Enter your preferred contact email address.

2) Enter your contact and work information. 
   Note: Cornell does not have a school key. You can leave that item blank.

3) Enter work place information to help students understand your organization.

4) Once you have entered in this information, the Career Services Office will approve your account and you will be free to post job openings and internship positions.

Contact career@cornell.edu or Demetra Dentes (dd21@cornell.edu) for more information on posting positions with Cornell Career Services.

Cornell Career Services is an excellent resource for industry specific events and networking within affinity groups.

For a wealth of information and resources, visit:

http://www.career.cornell.edu/career/alumni/