

Resolution 3: Institution of Core Values as a Positive Governance Document

Abstract: The purpose of the resolution is to formally institutionalize the Core Values of Cornell, developed collectively by the faculty, students, administration, and staff as a community compact. This will serve to clarify expectations of community interaction at Cornell and enable agency for those wishing to become members of the community.

Sponsored by: Jonathan T. Butcher

Reviewed by: Campus Codes Committee (CCC), 12/10/2025, discussed and revised in the University Assembly on January 27, 2026 and March 17, 2026, and by the CCC on March 11, 2026.

Whereas, Cornell University was founded as an institution where “any person could find instruction in any study”,

Whereas, Cornell University was chartered as New York’s land-grant university and charged with improving the lives and livelihoods of the state’s citizens through teaching, research, and public service,

Whereas, the Founding President of Cornell, A.D. White, noted, “The power of discovering truth and the power of imparting it are invariably found together”,

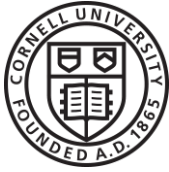
Whereas, Cornell has uniquely persisted in its dedication since its founding to recruiting and training students, faculty, and staff without favor or restriction as demonstrated by its pioneering non-sectarian, multi-racial, and coeducation model,

Whereas, Cornell has recognized when it has failed to live up to those ideals that it is precisely those enduring values that bind us to our mission and vision,

Whereas, in 2017 under the initiative of President Martha Pollack, cross-campus engagement and dialogue was made to formalize a set of Core Values,

Whereas, in 2019 Cornell University adopted a formal set of Core Values that serve as “the foundation for a more equitable and inclusive atmosphere for all Cornell campuses”,

Whereas, while not listed as a Core Value itself, shared governance has been a central feature of Cornell’s governance since its inception, and is reflected in spirit in all of the listed Core Values,



University Assembly

29 **Whereas**, Cornell has spent considerable energy and resources refining the Student Code of
30 Conduct, which include the Core Values, presenting them in the context of an inherently
31 negative document that enshrines infractions, hearings, and discipline for members of our
32 community,

33 **Whereas**, what was Cornell's Code of Conduct now applies only to students, yet encumbers
34 peers, staff, faculty, and administration to enforce and review,

35 **Whereas**, no formal presentation of the Core Values of the Cornell Community is given to
36 prospective students, staff, or faculty, precluding agency to consent to embody those values as a
37 member of the community,

38 **Whereas**, lack of agreement of Core Values is inherently destabilizing of community mission
39 and purpose, especially when conduct infracting those values is disciplined,

40 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the Core Values of Cornell be institutionalized as a governance
41 foundation for Cornell's shared community.

42 **Be it further resolved**, that acknowledgement of the Core Values statement be required for all
43 prospective students as condition for enrollment at the University, and provided to all faculty and
44 staff.

45 **Be it further resolved**, that annual recognition of those that best embody these values for the
46 benefit of the campuses be identified and celebrated by the university in each stakeholder group.

47 **Be it finally resolved**, that periodic review of the Core Values should be undertaken to reaffirm
48 them. If revisions are needed, this should be done via shared governance between Students,
49 Faculty, and Staff via their representative assemblies and central administration. Approval of
50 revised Core Values must be received from the University Assembly as condition of adoption.

51

52 Respectfully Submitted,

53 Jonathan T. Butcher, PhD

54 Chair, Campus Codes Committee Chair