

Cornell University
Employee Assembly

AGENDA
Employee Assembly Meeting
June 17, 2020
12:15 – 1:30 pm
Remote via Zoom

“An Active Voice for Cornell Staff”

We strive to make all events accessible. If you are in need of accommodations in order to fully participate, please contact the Office of the Assemblies at (607) 255-3715 or assembly@cornell.edu.

- I. Call to Order 12:15pm
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Business of the Day (40 Minutes)
 - a. Discuss 6/10/2020 EA Meeting and Staff Feedback (40 Minutes)
- V. Committee Reports (15 Minutes)
 - a. Executive Committee
 - b. Communications and Awards Committee
 - c. Education Committee
 - d. Welfare Committee
 - e. Benefits and Policy Committee
 - f. Elections Committee
- VI. New Business (20 Minutes)
 - a. Upcoming Forums
 - b. Open Discussion
- VII. Adjournment – 1:30pm

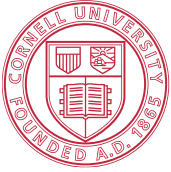
Note:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://cornell.zoom.us/j/94629278009?pwd=RWgzVTRRQ3EvaWg5TTFLcUxzbWNmdz09>

Meeting ID: 946 2927 8009

Password: 285967

Upcoming Meeting:



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly Minutes of the June 9, 2020 Meeting 3:45-5:00 PM Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. Chair Howell called the meeting to order at 3:45pm.
- b. *Members Present:* S. Barry, K. Barth, A. Brooks, M. Benda, T. Chams, J. Cooley, J. Creque, H. Depew, J. Duong, B. Fortenberry, G. Giambattista, B. Goodell, A. Haenlin-Mott, D. Hiner, A. Howell, R. Lochner, K. LoParco, A. McCabe, K. Mahoney, V. McAuley, J. Michael, R. Miegler, E. Miller, A. Miller, M. Newhart, C. Sanzone, H. Sheldon, K. Supron, L. Taylor, J. Townley, W. Treat, C. Wiggers, J. Withers
- c. *Members Absent:* A. Brooks, E. Ivory

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Motion to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2020—**approved** with no dissent

III. Business of the Day

- a. Financial Update presentation by Mary Opperman, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, and Paul Streever, Vice President for Budget and Planning.
 - i. Refer to the video and transcript on the [June 9, 2020 Employee Assembly meeting detail page](#) for more information.

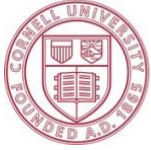
IV. New Business

- a. Open Discussion
 - i. Chair Howell stated that the Employee Assembly is in the process of setting up several new forums throughout the remainder of the summer. Some will be topical in nature and shorter.
 - ii. Chair Howell mentioned that it would be a good idea for some of the Employee Assembly members to provide assistance in facilitating these forums as it is summer and he or Executive Vice President Depew may not be available. He asked interested members to contact him offline.
 - iii. K. Barth thanked the constituents that joined this meeting and informed them that the Employee Assembly is working throughout the summer and that there are elections coming up in the fall.
 - iv. B. Goodell informed the assembly that the Benefits and Policy Committee will be meeting on June 16th at 10:30 AM. They will be joined by Amy Parmley and Seth Braehler for a discussion about gigs on Workday.

V. Adjournment

- a. Chair Howell adjourned the meeting at 5:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy Treat
Senior Coordinator, Office of the Assemblies



Cornell University
Employee Assembly

Feedback on Financial Update

Online and directly sent comments received (as of 5:00 PM Mon., 6/15/20)

Analysis

Total # of comments: 68

Anonymous comments: 51 or 75.0%

Identified comments: 17 or 25.0%

Very small cuts for everyone?

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Mon, 2020-06-15 13:31 (user name hidden)

Serious question. How much does the university spend on ALL (faculty AND staff) salaries? I assume it is a significant number. What would 1 or 1.5% of that number be? Considering that the average salary of Cornell faculty is over \$200,000 it seems possible that if everyone took a 1.5% cut it could solve the problem with minimal pain for all. (?)

Sent directly via email to Josh Cooley, Employee Assembly Representative At-Large

Submitted by Bill Wilcox on Sun, 2020-06-14

Josh,

As you are an active representative of the Cornell employee assembly I thank you for offering a platform to keep us employees informed. I am sending you this email in faith that my response to last week's presentation by Paul Streeter and Mary Opperman will be considered by the employee assembly as I assume that there will be rebuttal to the administrations consideration of further cutting employees pay and/ or retirement contributions. Like the first individual who was given an opportunity to respond after the presentation, I too have been an employee long enough to remember the 2008-2016 economic recession. I too very vividly recall Cornell's promise to restore staffing to functional levels after sizable downsizing and to "catch us up" on our wages once the recovery happened. Those of us who were at Cornell during those times have very fresh impressions in our minds of being understaffed, going without annual raises followed by years of extremely low annual raises that did not even keep up with inflation and

being asked to cover for those positions lost. What is also fresh in our minds is the stress and unbelievably low morale in the work force that spread through FM and across campus like a cancer. The staff at Cornell during the recession were asked to take the heavy blow for the greater good, and to protect the students, faculty and research. Be "Cornell Red". And so we did. We rebuilt, we absorbed the stress, the blows financially in our checks, our personal lives and families sacrificed as gas rose to \$4 a gallon, our cost of living and taxes continued to rise ever higher and that ultimately put us in a debt to income ratio we hadn't seen in our lifetimes...

Surely the University had learned from these unprecedented economic hardships and as the economy has boomed in the past 4-5 years, it goes without saying that the University absolutely needed and was to be safeguarding against another inevitable economic down turn. Even as the university continued to dramatically expand the square footage of the university, execute full gut renovations, expanding departments and offerings, all while growing the endowment, we had to be planning for the inevitable. The Ithaca campus must have been investing wisely and surely must have been creating safeguard funds for the inevitable or in this case, unforeseeable economic crisis of the future. So here we are in 2020, and its rewind and repeat. It doesn't appear that any safeguards were developed from our hard lessons of past. We are currently in the midst of our largest campus expansions and too deeply invested to halt operations. And again, Cornell staff employees are being told to take the heavy blows to protect the students, faculty and research for the greater good of the University. Without a doubt the staffs debt to income will again continue to widen, stress levels will be through the roof, morale will reach all-time lows, but this time with an added hit of the retraction of wages and or cutting contributions to endowed retirements.

Those of us able to stay employed should all feel grateful that we still have a job and I think we are. And even though it hurts I think everyone was excepting to no annual 20-21 raise, for the greater good. but in year that has already seen heavy diminution to 401k accounts, the additional hit of suspending the hiring agreement of endowed employees to contribute 10% to retirement contributions feels excessive. There was no promise of returning that contribution in the future. Will the 10% contribution be honored again next year or will it be forever reduced or maybe suspended indefinitely? Only uncertainty was offered. I'm sure that state employees are not welcoming pay cuts either but I'm curious to know how it was determined to completely cut the endowed staffs 10% of wage contribution across the board but State employees will only see 1-5% pay cuts or possibly no cuts to lower payed staff? Second, I'd like to understand why the university cannot borrow money at the near 0% interest currently available or why the university can't simply borrow from its several billion \$ endowment for the projected shortfalls and pay those loans back with the \$25,000,000 it is saving by not giving pay raises for 20-21? It is my understanding that there is no plan to return those wages to the employees in the future so this is a \$25,000,000 windfall, every year, for the university until the end of time. So even in the worst of scenario 1, 2 or 3 that was laid out for us in the presentation the loans could be paid back in 2.5 to 10 years or less. The last thing that sticks out to me about the presentation was that it was mentioned several times that it is not the university's policy to tap the endowment for any reasons other than what the governing body

has set forth. But it didn't take long and it sure doesn't feel good to be on the receiving end of a 10% cut to retirement that was also a university policy promised at hire or giving back annual raises that were based on good performance.

In closing, understandably, we are all, including Cornell University, suffering from this pandemic. But I leave you with this. Throughout history when economic crisis hits, one thing remains consistent when it passes. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It is my wish that the employee assembly take to task the scenarios laid out the other night and ask that the university be fair and balanced in the treatment of its staff to insure we too can come out of this crisis unlike the shortfalls we have yet to fully recover from as a result of the 2008 economic crash. We all know we are employed to serve the students and research of Cornell. However, I can't think of a single scenario where students and research could function without the staff that supports it. It can't always be the dedicated Cornell employee and their families that takes the long term, irreversible brunt of these scenarios.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bill

Early retirement incentive

Submitted by Christopher R. Baumunk on Mon, 2020-06-15 07:46

Dear Sir,

As for the retirement incentive, will the current Endowed 10 years service and 55 age be the guidelines for the incentive? Or would there be looser restrictions for those close to retirement age?

Thanks Chris Baumunk

Faculty

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Sun, 2020-06-14 08:10 (user name hidden)

Will faculty be subjected to the same cuts as staff? It really isn't fair if they are not.

Salary reduction/retirement contribution suspension

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Sun, 2020-06-14 08:07 (user name hidden)

I am grateful for all the university has done to mitigate the effects of this crisis. But I believe that "taxing" all employees at the same percentage adversely impacts those in lower pay bands much more than those in higher ones. Lower pay band employees will feel the effects of this much more quickly than higher ones. This feels almost like a regressive tax.

Same standard 0-5% pay cut

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 21:06 (user name hidden)

Given I don't know the specific numbers, this may not be feasible, but I don't understand why the 1-5% pay cut (depending on the graduated thresholds that pay cuts would apply to) isn't a standard plan for both contract and endowed employees. Why the different treatment? I would greatly appreciate the option of keeping the retirement match even if that meant a small pay cut. I agree with those who have proposed giving the option depending on each person's priorities--either money going into retirement for long-term investment or maintaining pay levels for shorter-term needs.

Is it possible to hear where else cost savings may be happening on the personnel side, especially in faculty summer pay, similar reductions to pay/retirement for faculty, any consolidations in administration levels? This would be helpful to feel like we are all feeling the pinch, although a 1-5% pay cut on someone who is a staff member (hourly or lower-band exempt employees especially) versus what a faculty members makes feels very different, but would still feel like every person is valued and appreciated for the work they do in more equitable ways. Are faculty similarly having their retirement match eliminated and/or a 1-5% pay cut?

Separate from this, if there was a way to determine more quickly which employees could or will remain remote, this could alleviate some stress on living expenses. I know personally that if I knew I could/would be remote or mostly remote, I would search for alternate housing further from campus that would be more cost effective. If I knew I didn't have to commute every day (or pay high parking fees if I wanted to be anywhere on campus) then this would make a pay reduction much more palatable because I could save a significant amount on my monthly rent.

Not Reimaging Cornell 2

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 17:04 (user name hidden)

As someone who lived through the Reimaging Cornell, I was very hopeful that Cornell would have a better approach to dealing with the current financial crisis. I ask that Cornell be completely transparent and involve employees in this major decision that impacts all of us. There are so many voices who are not able to give their input today, because this was such a well kept secret. If we are truly all in this together, then the entire Cornell staff needs to be given an opportunity to provide their ideas and thoughts. Together is the only way we can make it through this!

I think it is important to

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 17:02 (user name hidden)

I think it is important to reiterate that staff had little to no time to react to this. I understand the closed meeting but once done, it should have been widely shared for input. Now, it is just rushed.

What are the tax implications for salary reductions vs. retirement contribution reductions? short term and long term?

What about faculty? No cuts to their income? It reminds all staff where we stand in the eye of the university.

The university has a moral obligation to its staff.

Submitted by Anonymous Committee Member on Fri, 2020-06-12 17:00 (user name hidden)

It is unreasonable for the university to expect individual staff members to make sacrifices for it, when it has systematically and continually cut staff out of the decision-making process. Furthermore, requiring staff ingenuity (and, perhaps, benefiting from the panic that such a prolonged period of uncertainty has wrought) in making INDIVIDUAL cuts/decisions ("This might hurt the least, so I guess it's the best option") is unconscionable. (Equally unconscionable is perpetuating an environment that encourages staff or faculty to look at other essential members of this community as if they can be sloughed off like so much detritus, simply because the immense complexity of this place makes it hard to understand how others vitally contribute.)

The university must unequivocally vow to keep the people who it currently employs here. Not "whenever possible", not "to the degree possible". We are resourceful and creative - but it is inhumane to expect our flexibility and continued devotion to this place, if it will not make the same strong, unwavering commitment to us.

communication and equity

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 16:31 (user name hidden)

Thank you for sharing this information with the community and to the assembly and presenters for holding the meeting and sharing the recording. I am concerned that the method by which feedback was sought from staff was not as thorough as has been the case with faculty and students. I understand that this was scheduled as part of a regular Employee Assembly meeting, but wish that considering that this was such an important topic with far-reaching impacts was not better advertised among staff (I did not hear about this meeting until this morning) and that there was not an open meeting or a survey of staff similar to those that were offered to faculty. While I understand the need to manage budgets, and the reason that pay or retirement decreases will need to be implemented, I am concerned that both the method of sharing information and the fact that staff, but not faculty, are the ones being implemented demonstrates a lack of value placed on staff and our role at Cornell. Given the 4 priorities listed at the beginning of the presentation, it's not clear to me why staff salaries will be cut rather than both staff and faculty, as staff are critical in the 4 priorities - in particular caring for our student population and maintaining a world class educational facility. Staff are critical in offering support - academically, socially, healthcare, and in other arenas - to all Cornell students, including the student populations most at risk in these tumultuous times. If the burden of reduced salaries is to be spread across Cornell - why not distribute it among all employees to reduce the overall impact each individual in the employee community? Please consider applying the 1-5% in salary reductions (amount varied by income level, as suggested) to all employees, rather than making this designation limited to staff. Staff and faculty are both critical to Cornell's mission - and that should be reflected in how the administration seeks input on planning decisions and budget measures, including salary/retirement reductions.

Furlough, morale

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 16:21 (user name hidden)

If the salary will be cut in every possible scenario, please do so via furlough. The benefit to the University will be the same but staff can use the difference for our children stuck at home with reduced daycare availability and spouses who also need to work, and reduce infection potential for those on campus. And also perhaps then the university will better understand the loss that such a cut represents when it manifests as missing labor.

For any who were in place for a promotion this year--already having been working at higher-level duties that necessitated changing a job description, and not recognized for it, for the year previous and now at least the year following--shall they return to working within the job title they're being paid for? It's hardly motivating to work more and more with less at the staff level,

especially when the faculty were exempted from promotions the same time staff were barred from them--doubly so for those designated essential who have been exposing themselves to risk, doing the same level of work with reduced staff and people rotating in and out of quarantine, while faculty have generally stayed or been ordered to stay safe at home. To go immediately to across-the-board salary cuts even in the best-case scenario, while reserving the endowment as the emergency measure, shows very clearly where the perception of value is. Each scenario cites student enrollment and student activity to determine how bad things are. For those enterprise units and units who have nothing to do with students--which contribute to the university coffers instead of taking from them--if the option existed to mitigate these measures by increasing profit over FY20, I guarantee Administration will see some concrete "Cornell creativity" instead of people building castles in the sky.

Measure twice - Cut once

Submitted by Andrew Joseph Darrol on Fri, 2020-06-12 16:20

We don't know the number of individuals that may take the early retirement incentive and the savings of continuous remote work (reducing utilities / rent / value of unutilized footprints if sold) - those savings amounts are not incorporated into the 3 scenarios (-\$98M, -\$226M, -\$314M).

The current planned mitigation actions derive over half of the savings from Workforce related actions, some could say the staff is being overly targeted prematurely without truly considering additional options.

Suggesting that we maintain the current initiatives that are already in place (Capital spending restriction / Salary freeze / Hiring pause) and wait until the dust settles with regards to Fall enrollment. At that time it could be determined which of the 3 scenarios are we are actually in / have a better understand of the working remote cost savings / realize what the workforce size may be after early retirements & continuous attrition / have the ability to further vet additional cost savings or revenue generating ideas.....before additional actions are taken that financially impact the staff.

Shared sacrifices should mean shared rewards in good times

Submitted by Jamie Rosner Duong on Fri, 2020-06-12 16:16

If the staff are to make another sacrifice for an economic crisis as we did in 2008-09, there should be more done to improve salaries/benefits when the economy and Cornell's finances are doing well. Staff did not see any significant raises in all the years between 2009 and 2020 despite record growth in the stock market (which should translate to the endowment) as well

as a 50% increase in operating expenses from a decade earlier. Hopefully we can avoid cuts to salaries or benefits but if those are necessary, a better commitment from the University to make up for those cuts in the future would alleviate a lot of stress that employees are feeling right now. Cuts to retirement, especially at a time when the market is likely to be at another low point would be very harmful to staff financial security in their retirement. Some kind of formulation that protects workers earning at or below the median salary would be a good way to protect those who can least afford cuts.

Perhaps if salary/benefit cuts are absolutely required staff could receive some kind of "store credit" that could be used by them or their family towards Cornell tuition etc. While not perfect, it would lessen the blow and keep Cornell dollars within Cornell.

Work from home option

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 16:05 (user name hidden)

Someone asked about how long-term working from home might result in savings through ability to reduce rent or shuffling departments and groups. Mary Opperman answered but her connection was poor. I got the sense that the university doesn't think working from home would save money but that answer flies against everything I've read. I know it results in savings for me personally and if I continued to work from home, I could more easily take a pay cut. I understand CIT has made the decision to continue to work from home indefinitely. Why did they make that decision if there was no cost benefit? Just the savings from not having to install sneeze guards etc. in offices would be significant. And isn't it costly when staff are out sick? Keeping us distanced is beneficial for the time being.

Hardship on older employees

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 15:50 (user name hidden)

Sorry if this sounds like a rant but I totally oppose your across the board retirement plan pause. Being in the latter part of my career, a 10% hit in retirement contributions, plus no SIP, plus a crash in my retirement account, all within 5 years of retiring makes for the appearance of fairness of an-across-the-board retirement pause, but in fact it is completely unfair. I am out of time to make up that kind of money. If you have 20-30 years of service in that should count for something. I feel you are taking the easy way out. At the very least a sliding scale of a %decrease for people in certain age brackets should be taken into account. for example 55-65 get 7% 45-54 get 5%, 35-44 get 3% under 34 get 0. If you want to add another dimension for years of service, go for it! Why not take back some vacation time? I would even favor a 5% pay cut to get the after tax retirement money in my account. It would be a lot fairer to those of us who have put in the time and make Cornell the great place it is. I also favor cutting jobs, even if

they make for tough decisions. The President's goal of keeping jobs at all cost is a luxury we simply can't afford. We can't keep living beyond our means. Leave it to the academic units to make the tough decisions on where they want to prioritize and where they want the cuts to come. Rethink your plan, it needs work.

Retirement poll

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 15:45 (user name hidden)

Could you send a poll and find out who may be interested in taking the early retirement incentive before deciding to cut salaries on the contract side? If enough eligible employees are interested, it may not be necessary to reduce people's pay.

Well stated.

Submitted by Christa Downey on Fri, 2020-06-12 15:27

Thank you for this. It is well stated.

Are we truly all in this together?

Submitted by Rhonda H. Velazquez on Fri, 2020-06-12 15:23

I appreciate the herculean efforts being made to avoid a large number of layoffs, and realize it is a very complex and uncertain situation. Would faculty be called upon to make similar sacrifices to staff in terms of salary freezes and not receiving university payments into retirement plans?

Shared sacrifice and realities

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 14:57 (user name hidden)

I understand that Cornell is working hard to retain our positions and is thoughtfully evaluating all options. However, this is not like the 2008 crisis and those making decisions are likely in a different situation than most staff. We are at home. We have school age children who we are teaching. We are working early or working late or working weekends because our partners are also working full-time jobs (if we are lucky). Or we have less income and are faced with difficult choices daily. Some of us work to bring the best and brightest students into the university so

that faculty have people to teach. Some of us work in development so that the endowment grows. Some of us work in facilities so that faculty have functional labs, equipment, and classroom spaces.

We worry about our job security while we are being asked to give more, to do more with less, and to continue to support faculty needs when they are not sharing the sacrifice.

Difficult Decisions Ahead

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 14:28 (user name hidden)

First and foremost I want to express my thanks for the presentation to the Employee Assembly and to the University administration for not rushing into any decisions and for soliciting comments from staff. Peer institutions announced their decision to stop funding retirement accounts a few weeks ago; those decisions were so quick that I wonder if their staff were able to comment.

As a follower of the news, I know a pay cut would be hard for many. When the pandemic started the need for food assistance grew faster than since the Great Depression. News of the number of people who were only one paycheck away from not being able to feed their family and pay for housing or make their car payment could be weighing on the minds of University administration who are making suggestions for the steps the University should take. The proposal to stop the University contributions to retirement rather than reduce pay for the same number of work hours would be the easiest way to not put some staff in a more difficult financial position today.

However, as an endowed employee who is closer to retirement than not, I too am concerned about missing the University contribution to retirement and being able to "catch up" from missing a year of contributions. I would be in favor of a pay cut similar to that proposed for the Contract College side. When looking at the options, has the University factored in the lower employer contributions to retirement, Social Security (and I believe Medicare) that would be required of the University if there were pay cuts causing overall payroll to be lower?

If not contributing to retirement is determined to be the best course of action on the Endowed side, I ask for a few things that would not place a large financial burden on the University. 1) when the University is speaking with our elected representatives at the State and Federal level, please ask them to consider legislation to allow anyone who does not get an employer match into retirement to be able to contribute more on their own to their retirement account (similar to how the CARES Act allowed retirees to not take a distribution this year); it is unclear if the current legislation for those who do not have employer-sponsored retirement benefits would apply to those whose employers do not contribute to retirement accounts for one year. 2) ask the benefits office staff to create a template letter we can use to ask our elected

representatives to propose/consider the same legislation. 3) ask the benefits office to communicate other ways that staff can contribute to our retirement savings/reduce our taxable income, especially if additional legislation is introduced to assist workers across America (I am thinking of communications similar to the "Vested Interest" brochure the Office of Trusts, Estates and Gift Planning recently sent to alumni about the CARES Act).

When all of the hard decisions are made by the University administration are complete I will be grateful if there is as little job loss as possible. I can only imagine how difficult it would be to find another job in this region if there are many talented people competing for the same small pool of jobs that might become open.

Might NYS reduce contributions to retirement plans

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 14:20 (user name hidden)

Paul Streeter indicated that reducing or pausing retirement contributions for employees of the Contract Colleges isn't an option b/c it is a NYS obligation to maintain these contributions. First, it's important to note that salary cuts to Contract College staff and faculty will lead to reductions in retirement contributions, since those contributions are based on the employee's salary. I'm not aware if any of the funds for the Contract College's retirement contributions come directly from the State, or if they all come from Cornell, but if all or some of the funding comes directly from the State's budget, isn't there a risk of additional cuts to the State's retirement contributions, given the financial state of NYS? We've heard some members of the U.S. senate say they do not want the Federal government to "bail out" NYS and other coastal states during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the retirement systems of these States have been mentioned specifically as reasons why the Federal government should not provide funding to States' governments. Therefore, I'm concerned Contract College employees might be at risk of cuts to their retirement contributions in two ways, as a result of cut to their salaries and direct cuts that NYS might be contemplating to account for its large budget deficit. Thank you.

Even "Best" Case Scenario Crushes Staff

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 14:12 (user name hidden)

First staff lose their tiny SIP increases for the coming year, then we pause hiring for vacancies meaning that remaining staff will have to work harder/more hours (if salaried) for the same amount of money, then even the "best" case scenario proposed here takes away our retirement contributions for the coming year, which represents a cumulative effect greater than a 10% salary reduction. The salaried staff where I work are already asked to well beyond the standard 38-40 hours/week to get all our work done, so now there will be fewer members of our team, so we will work even more hours AND our ability to retire will effectively be pushed

back for another year or more due to the lack of contributions for the coming year. Morale is already really low given everything going on this spring, isolation, stress trying to take care of children/homeschool them, fear over losing jobs, financial impacts of COVID, etc. Now Cornell will take away 100% of our retirement contributions for the coming year and give us more work to do, so I hope you realize morale is about to go into the toilet. If you care about staff you will find a way to still provide some amount of CURP, even if it's only a percent or two, and tap the endowment to some extent even at the \$98 mil deficit level. Faculty may be the "brains" of the university, but staff are the backbone and you're about to break our backs.

Worrisome and disappointing

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 14:05 (user name hidden)

Listening to the presentation and reading the attached paperwork, it sounds as if pay cuts/retirement cuts are a done deal and that no option which does *not* include pay cuts for staff has reached the shortlist of potential paths.

I echo many other people's feelings of being undervalued here.

Short SIGHTED

Submitted by Christa Downey on Fri, 2020-06-12 12:48

I realized my typo after submitting. I'm so burned up about this, I let the keys fly.

These recommendations are short sited

Submitted by Christa Downey on Fri, 2020-06-12 12:47

This looks predetermined without much room for input, but I will share anyway.

It is shortsighted to take away retirement and not at least give people the choice to have it come from their salary rather than pre-tax investments. What is the harm to the university in offering choice to staff? Choice opens the possibility for keeping alive some sense of trust and community. Choice allows people to feel heard.

I'm most disappointed that choice is not an option. Within that context, I would much rather have a pay cut than a cut to my pre-tax investments. Looking beyond my own personal finances, I firmly believe retirement contributions should be an opt-out system for employees

and that society benefits when people have the means to retire (opinion, I know). Eliminating employer contributions will mean some employees will choose not to contribute and are then more likely to need social services from the community in the future. It is a short sighted approach.

How is it in any collective body's best interest to proceed in this way?

If individuals prefer a retirement contribution cut to a pay cut, that should be their right, but again – CHOICE. Imagine the trust and staff morale you might maintain if staff are given choice.

Are faculty contributing?

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 12:36 (user name hidden)

If the university says we are all in this together, then I hope they are looking into faculty contributing to the cause as well with salary and/or retirement reductions. Faculty and staff are both employees to the university, and both contributing to the mission of the university. Please treat everyone equal and allow faculty to contribute to the cause as well rather than just staff trying to do more with less. Afterall, faculty are still able to receive promotions at this time, and staff positions are on freeze and now salaries/retirement are being considered to be reduced. I hope the university looks at all employees as equal and not just cut staff benefits.

CURP contributions are important

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 12:25 (user name hidden)

The cessation of contributions to CURP would be very destructive to employees' long-term retirement planning. Many employees could not afford to totally make up the loss of CURP contributions by increasing their own TDA contributions. Cornell works to encourage employees to contribute to TDAs, but many employees do not, partly because they live from paycheck to paycheck. Younger employees will have the option to leave Cornell for better opportunities, but employees close to retirement may feel compelled to stay despite the setback and will have to work longer than expected. Poor health may make that impossible, leaving them financially unprepared at retirement. Employees also fear that a cessation to CURP contributions announced as temporary will become permanent or lead to a permanently lower employer contribution level. Cornell needs to look honestly at the returns from discretionary spending. Cornell should always demand significant results from its spending on projects and not maintain some projects without proof of strongly positive results.

Faculty and administrators too?

Submitted by Jeff Ceria on Fri, 2020-06-12 11:51

Hello, I am writing with a question (unfortunately I have not been able to watch the video recording of the zoom meeting). I wonder if this proposed budget cut will equally affect faculty and administration. I would also like to be reminded if the cancellation of the SIP for this year affects faculty and administration. The reason I am asking about these things is because I know that faculty are allowed to be promoted during this season, but staff are not. At a university that prides itself on equality, it would be unfortunate if these cuts were affecting only the lower paid people on campus. Thanks for any reply.

Explain how faculty contribute to the Univ solutions?

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 11:29 (user name hidden)

As someone who worked on campus through multiple fiscal crises, I have yet to learn how - if at all - the faculty contribute to the "we are in this together" solution to financial hardship? While I get that we want to retain the top teachers and research funding, at this time of global hardship and many smaller institutions going under, there are not as many options for the faculty (particularly young faculty) to flee. I believe staff have been squeezed as far as possible, and still do so much with less and less. The faculty must contribute as campus community members, we staff have many fewer opportunities for generating revenue as faculty (who can do speaking, consulting, and many other earning potential activities).

Every staff member can name higher level employees who have worked beyond their efficient work potential, and I would hope that there could be hard choices in assessment of the production for G level and higher faculty AND staff. If they are not contributing equitably, furlough or layoff those who are not able to keep up with workload, technology, or other aspects that can be measured.

Voluntary Retirement Plan for Contract College

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 11:29 (user name hidden)

I am seeking additional information concerning the voluntary retirement plan for contract college staff: First, is the six month incentive payment period added to your total time in NYSLRS, and secondly, what type of retirement contribution/compensation would the contract college receive?

Give us the option

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 11:15 (user name hidden)

As many have pointed out, the 10% CURP reduction seems far more severe of a cut than the 1-5% scaled cuts in the Contract College.

I, and other Endowed staff I spoke to, would like the option to have the pay reduction instead of the CURP reduction. For early-career employees, a huge retirement contribution cut like that now potentially means tens of thousands in losses in ~40 years. It's not an equivalent measure. (It's also, needless to say, these staff pay/benefits cuts are already on top of the *actual* payout due to no COL increase this year.)

Use of endowment funds

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 11:12 (user name hidden)

I understand why you wouldn't want to tap into the endowment funds but, FY2019 the fund gained 5.3% to reach a record high 7.3 billion, that's around 370 million increase in 1yr. From FY2014 - FY2019 the fund gained 1.6 billion.

Consider multiple approaches for Faculty and Staff Cuts

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 11:08 (user name hidden)

I appreciate the efforts of all the university leaders during these difficult times. This is not new, but much deeper issues for those of us who have been here for a long time. What I am hopeful for is that leadership will direct faculty cuts first (pay, benefits) and not just the staff as we have been hit hard since 2008. In addition, the university had implemented processes to not increase headcount and yet they went out the window. Look at how many positions have been added; no spans and layers have gone out the window; and now the staff are going to be cut again (potentially). I URGE the university to give options to staff if cuts are imminent. For example, if you want the higher paid staff to take cuts, allow the pay to be cut but not the effort. Effort reductions will totally affect years of service credit towards retirement (pay cuts do too) AND if you don't reduce their effort we can still accrue full time benefits to offset the pay decrease. This gives at least some incentive and really doesn't hurt the university. Also, if you push to reduce pay AND effort, it hurts NYS employees with their sick (HAP) balances which we can use towards retirement health insurance payments.

I urge the university to give some options. Staff have been a part of many new efficiencies in processing and have taken on a lot since 2008, been good citizens to keep our wonderful university prestigious and a wonderful place to work, but please do not hurt just the staff. There are so many faculty who do not work to their full capacity and would like to see a drive to retirement programs for faculty to allow for new faculty hires and not hurt staff by cutting them. How will you address union staff as I doubt they can be cut, how is that fair?

There must be a better way

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 11:01 (user name hidden)

I was here in 2008 when cuts had to be made...and it was the staff / non-exempt that took the biggest hit, learning how to do more with less. Now...again...it is not the faculty/ those with the highest salary's that are asked to take a cut or reduction in order to save the University funds so they can continue to operate...it is the staff /non-exempt employees...the ones who have the most to loose that are being asked to give up more. I understand that SIP needed to be taken....we never really saw that come back to what it was before 2008...in fact it doesn't really amount to a cost of living increase. But now to suggest eliminating CURP...even for a year...that's not only disappointing...it raises many deep concerns...first and foremost...how can those close to retirement hope to recover what a year of those contributions would have been....not only in the contributions themselves...but in the investments and returns. There is not enough time for many to absorb that loss and rebuild. That's quite a cut you're asking us to take.. If you care about your employees...then perhaps you should try to find other solutions to solving the financial problems that Cornell is facing, and look to those that have more expendable money. Maybe it's time to ask Faculty to think enough of Cornell to step up and do their fare share as well. We are all supposed to be in this together...aren't we?

Difficult Decisions

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 10:32 (user name hidden)

I don't see how the salary reduction of 1-5% in the contract colleges is equivalent to no retirement contribution (last I checked 10% of my salary) and the corresponding future earnings for endowed employees. I would like to hear more about why this is considered equitable and compareable. I understand that difficult decisions will have to be made. Our students, their parents, and our faculty, have very high expectations of our services. We will have to start doing less with less. We can't continue to be expected to do more, or even the same, with less.

Leadership in scope reduction

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 10:13 (user name hidden)

I appreciate Mary Opperman's observation that we are a community of highly creative people with ambitious ideas for things we want to do (it is one of the reasons I value being part of this institution), and also her observation that we need to right-size our ideas, and therefore the size of our staff, to our true, sustainable financial capacity. However, in every cycle of cuts I have navigated in my 30 years here, I have yet to see true leadership around right-sizing the scope of our initiatives to match the realities of our resources. The difficult decisions about cutting staff are made out of budget necessity, but I have yet to see a leader who can make the equally difficult choices to reduce our scope of work accordingly. Doing the same with less is just as unsustainable, even if the numbers on the budget sheet look great, as doing more than we can afford. I truly hope every dean and every vice president is being held accountable for demonstrating not just what staff they will cut, but what work - initiatives, ideas, projects, events - they will ALSO cut, so that those who survive the cuts can have realistic, attainable goals to be achieved. Without this, we will be in this situation again, and again, and again.

A few thoughts

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 10:08 (user name hidden)

Some of us have been around for a while and have a somewhat cynical view of how often promises are fulfilled. Can we get a guarantee, in writing, with a penalty to the University should they choose to break that guarantee, that the proposed "temporary" cuts to salaries/retirement will be restored in FY2022?

Asking everyone *but* faculty to sacrifice, once again, is making the repeated "we're all in this together" messaging a bit hard to swallow. Perhaps they could consider making similar sacrifices that they're expecting of their support staff. Unless they'd like to handle all of that work themselves.

Long-term, perhaps having the Ithaca campus's fortunes be less tied to the performance of the campuses in New York City (the medical hospital and the tech campus) is something to consider. I'm old enough to remember when we were "promised" that the New York tech campus would not take any resources from Ithaca.

Earmarking savings

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 10:05 (user name hidden)

I was hoping that the presentation would also include some explanation of any sort of earmarking that is being done for specific cost-savings strategies. For example, when the voluntary salary cut by senior leadership was first announced, it was stated that every penny of that savings would go toward student financial aid. While I understand that choice from the perspective of our mission, it also sends a message to staff that preserving jobs is not a driver for that particular cost-saving action. If other actions are being similarly earmarked (e.g. to cover student financial aid) I would like to see those choices disclosed transparently. Those choices are a reflection of our values as an institution, and the specific choice cited here did not align fully with my own values, an area where I very much hope that I will find common ground with my employer.

judiciously using a bit of endowment?

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 09:58 (user name hidden)

I believe it is mission critical to remain a "need blind institution" and thus find ways to make up any gap for financial aid that might be caused by the current economic, viral induced, climate. To support the mission of Cornell and retain my rewarding job I am willing to share in the financial responsibility. There was no salary improvement this year, so I (we) have contributed ~2-3% in real dollars. Further I am willing to take a 1 year salary reduction to support Cornell (and thus honestly my future employment). I believe there should be a salary cap under which there is no salary reduction (e.g. ~\$50-70K/year) and also agree with a graduated decrease, i.e. make more = a larger cut. Lastly, I understand that future earning from the endowment should be preserved and that much of it is restricted in use.

However, I think if there has been a time for a one time use of some of it prudently for financial aid this might be it; with some use in all three budget deficient forecasts.

I encourage examining a model where a sustainable, small portion of the endowment is used to help offset salary reduction (not eliminate them). For example, if there is already a 3% loss of SIP and someone stands to lose 3% more how about using the endowment to the extent this person loses only 1.5% of salary, i.e. a total fiscal year loss for this person of 4.5% instead of 6%? The other examples at the 1-5% reductions are obvious.

If the math works it appears that shared individual and institutional accommodations could work for Cornell, individual employee work satisfaction, and in fact likely the benefit of the entire economy (esp. Tompkins Co. and neighboring ones where Cornell employees live). Thank you for all your thoughtful and hard work to face this challenge to the best of our ability.

Retirement elimination for low-paid staff - financial hardship

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 09:33 (user name hidden)

As a staff member who is in a lower band of pay, I already pay 60 percent of my salary in rent. I can barely afford to live and work here already. Taking away Cornell's retirement contribution for a year is a significant reduction in benefits, and the benefits are the only thing keeping me even just barely able to survive here. Please consider other options and consider skipping elimination of CU retirement contribution for low-earning staff. As another commenter noted, very highly paid faculty are not getting reductions and their lives won't be severely affected like ours will if you reduce some of their income/benefits/extras. While I realize you want to ensure faculty retention, faculty will understand that cuts are happening everywhere, so it's not like Cornell is singling them out. Also please consider urgently adopting more energy efficiency measures that could significantly reduce what Cornell spends on heat, light, and so on. For example, the building I work in is consistently greatly overheated and there are incredible inefficiencies everywhere. LED lighting would also help, and auto shut-off lighting. Closing some buildings overnight and reducing heat or cooling. Better insulation and windows could help. Geothermal. Green buildings/roofs/walls. There are so many more measures that could make Cornell a leader in this area, and there are even grants that could help accomplish this. We could be saving millions in operating expenses.

It is entirely inappropriate

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 08:56 (user name hidden)

It is entirely inappropriate to be having discussions regarding permanent long-term income cuts to employees (i.e. no CURP contributions) while simultaneously demanding that those employees all take on significant additional responsibilities due to a hiring freeze, attrition, and rapidly shifting self-contradictory direction from above with impossibly short deadlines. The University must address the reality that the current crunch-level workload being required of all staff is unsustainable, and expecting us to maintain that level while simultaneously reducing compensation is patently absurd. The concept "Do more with less" is a nonsense corporate platitude that has no business here. At some point, we must do less with less. At the very least, maintain status quo without continuing to pile on "initiatives" on increasingly smaller and more stressed single points of failure, or risk disaster when those points decide it's no longer worth the stress at the newly reduced compensation.

Revenue generating in house construction work

Submitted by Josh Cooley on Fri, 2020-06-12 08:45

What is the reasoning as to why FCS is not allowed to hire temporary trades people to do departmental work in house rather than allow that work to be contracted out? It would appear

that if we are doing that work in house with our FM project group a portion of the money spent on those projects, while expense to the particular department, would be revenue to FM-FCS (University department) instead of 100% of that money spent leaving the University by contracting it out. Surely we were not in the business of doing that type of work and losing money on it. It would seem that the cost of having a temporary tradespersons on staff dedicated to departmental work would not exceed the hourly rate that they bill out. The argument that if we don't do the work in house the money won't get spent on this type of work has proven not to be the case over and over again. The work still happens. That type of work budgeted at around \$350,000 or less is generally less expensive to do with our FCS-FM projects groups as the overhead of design, project management, and contract management are considerably less than when work goes out to bid. Factor in at cost material and now comparable labor rates to contractors, the understanding of our capabilities and the discretion used to only execute the work we can do in a fiscally responsible manner to the University and what you have is a win/win situation for the units within the University, the employees doing this work, as well as the University as a whole.

Furthermore, if we are looking at a reduction in spending towards this work in the future, wouldn't now be the time to organize a temporary labor force to accommodate all the work that is currently out there? We are talking about reductions and cutting and appear to be completely overlooking this opportunity to bring more revenue in.

Furloughs

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 08:43 (user name hidden)

Yes, do that now through then end of July so we can also receive the additional \$600 a week plus unemployment. This would benefit everyone including helping the University.

Voluntary reduced hours/furloughs

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 08:39 (user name hidden)

Has the university leadership considered reaching out to staff members to see if there would be any interest in voluntary reduction in work hours/furloughs?

Very Dissappointed

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 08:39 (user name hidden)

It would be nice if Cornell would use some of the endowment and consider anyone that has 25+ years and meets the 55 and 10 criteria to be offered a one-year salary and one-year retirement contribution incentive. The thought of coming back to campus and risking our health is nerve racking. I agree that that the best approach is to allow the employees to decide if a retirement or pay cut would be best for their individual situations. Those of us that have been employed with Cornell for a long time and are close to retirement will not be able to bounce back as quickly as the younger generation.

So let me get this straight

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 08:39 (user name hidden)

Admin on tapping the endowment: "We can't possibly do that, it permanently decreases available funds and leads to having to cut expenses later! This is a totally unreasonable thing to ask of a multi-billion-dollar enterprise!"

Also admin: "Endowed staff will get no contributions to their retirement accounts this year, permanently decreasing their available funds and leading to expense cuts later. This is a totally reasonable thing to ask of heavily-indebted employees for whom the retirement contribution was part of the explicit hiring contract and implicit social contract!"

Other considerations on furloughs

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Fri, 2020-06-12 08:04 (user name hidden)

Has the university leadership considered an across the board short term furlough of one to two weeks for **all** faculty and staff to help reduce longer term furloughs and layoffs? What savings might a this option provide?

Disappointed

Submitted by Anonymous Committee Member on Fri, 2020-06-12 07:09 (user name hidden)

After listening to the video, I was very disappointed to see that faculty were not impacted by this message. Academic posting continues to be posted while non-academic position has been frozen for the majority.

Nothing ever changes it is always the staff that are affected. Faculty are still getting promotions and summer salary. Many faculty are getting more in summer salary than staff make in one year.

What do the staff get possible furlough, layoff, or reduction in salary. Staff are the ones that are behind the faculty.

Cornell University has a \$7.3 Billion in Endowments. Listening to Paul, I understand why you do not want to use the Endowments. However, maybe you should. We heard the same thing in 2008/2009 about the Endowment. It is time to use it and stop reducing staff and staff salary. I support both Scenario #1 Full Residential Hybrid Instruction and \$98M.

Wow

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 23:18 (user name hidden)

Between the loss of SIP and now CURP I'm looking at nearly \$16K income loss in our single income household in this year alone, not including lost compounded growth. As I reflect on the 39 hours of benefits for exempt employees that never returned to 40 hours of benefits, you'll have to forgive me for being skeptical that we'll see a return of 10% CURP next FY. One of the reasons that many exempt employees accept a lower salary than private enterprise would afford and opt to live in a very highly taxed state, is the CURP contribution. It goes without saying that Cornell is gambling when it comes to knowing the impact CURP reductions will have on retaining staff who have highly marketable and necessary skill sets.

Contract College Feedback

Submitted by Angelica Keen on Thu, 2020-06-11 21:50

As a contract college member, neither one of these options are more equitable than the other. In the contract side we already pay more for health insurance than the endowed, have no vision plan, no access to the gyms on campus, and are required to put in funds for the NYS plan. As someone who worked on both sides, I actually took a pay cut moving over to the contract side although the salary was slightly more. The current deductions already impacting current monthly pay, an additional paycut would be even more difficult.

The effect of removing funds for the immediate without the SIP for contract college employees, doesn't take into account the current situation of prices inflating with the pandemic. To have access to even less funds immediately can cause issues with access to child care, paying mortgage/rent, commuting costs, and other basic necessities. Due to high costs of living some staff members have additional part time jobs, our household surely does, which were affected due to the recent shut down.

In removing retirement funds for endowed employees does have a larger long-term implications however does not impact the staff members directly during the 2021 fiscal year. If a plan moves forward, it should impact the staff equally in the same manner.

Retirement Cut (Endowed) VS. Pay Cut(Contract)

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 17:43 (user name hidden)

Cornell Leadership - If I am understanding your proposal correctly, you are proposing the following in every scenario ...

Endowed Employees - no Cornell retirement contributions (10% of salary) for FY 2021
Contract Employees - pay reduction of 1 - 5% based on pay range with some employees not having any reduction.

If my understanding is correct, I am VERY concerned about this proposal as it does not appear to be equitable between Endowed and Contract employees. Endowed employees would not only lose the retirement contribution for FY 2021, but they would also lose any compounded growth of that money for years to come, while Contract employees would be faced with a short-term one year deficit. Furthermore, I am struggling to understand how an effective 10% "reduction" of retirement income for Endowed employees is equal to a 1 - 5% pay reduction for Contract employees.

I know these are difficult decisions to make and you are doing your best to make the "right" decision. My request is that whatever your decision is, please make sure it is equitable regardless if the employee is an Endowed or Contract.

Perhaps the best approach is to allow the employee to decide if a retirement or pay cut would be best for their individual situation.

Retirement contribution versus pay reduction

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 16:12 (user name hidden)

What is the average retirement contribution on the endowed side? Some people may not contribute at all, whereas others may contribute to the maximum, so the impact will vary greatly. I agree with other commenters that we should be given a choice of salary reduction percentage or retirement contribution elimination, if possible. In particular, it would help couples at the University manage their finances, as both wage earners will be affected unpredictably, depending on if they are endowed or contract college. It would make all employees feel like everyone was contributing more equally to this recovery – 10 % (or whatever percent) from everyone and it would allow those nearing retirement (who will probably be impacted more) more control in how to recover/react to loss of salary/benefits before retirement.

Voluntary Retirement Plan

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 15:36 (user name hidden)

To get the 6 month incentive payment + 1 year retirement contribution is there a certain age you need to be do get this?

Worried about cuts to retirement

Submitted by Anonymous Student Role on Thu, 2020-06-11 15:33 (user name hidden)

Dear Cornell Leadership:

Thank you for your transparency and soliciting feedback. These are not easy discussions. I have concerns as an older worker about the cut to the retirement plan. As others have noted, it's in effect worse than a 10% pay cut. And for older workers, there is less time left to absorb the loss and rebuild in a very volatile investment environment. And as others have noted, that potential cut is coupled with foregoing a pay increase this upcoming year.

Is the retirement incentive an early retirement incentive, or meant for folks who are already eligible for retirement?

Is there any information you could share about the fixed salary level under which there would be no salary reduction?

Thank you for providing this forum.

Enterprise unit cuts

Submitted by Vicki L. Westfall on Thu, 2020-06-11 15:19

What is the logic in cutting staff in enterprise units that are revenue-generating? Wouldn't we want to increase activities in those units and not reduce resources?

voluntary retirement plan

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 14:49 (user name hidden)

Can someone explain what the 6 month incentive payment + 1 year retirement contribution is - 6 months of your yearly salary? and 1 year retirement contribution of a percentage or of your full salary? No clear explanation on that.

Other options to freeze retirement contributions

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 14:43 (user name hidden)

I know there are no right answers during such a difficult time in the world, but I agree with others that the impact to employees retirement is very real and extremely concerning to me. Has leadership considered reducing the Endowed CURP contribution rather than stop it all together for a year? Regarding the Contract College employees having their pay reduced, would there be a formula for them because depending on what plan/tier you are in aren't some of the contributions based on salary?

Concerned about reductions to retirement contributions

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 13:29 (user name hidden)

A cessation of retirement contributions is not just effectively a 10% paycut--this is real money we'll not be receiving and those contributions are part of any reasonable analysis of the remuneration we receive for our work--but it's also a cut to a payment into our retirement funds which we can't replace ourselves, tax-sheltered, if we're maxed out on personal contributions. 10% is a pretty large paycut to start with, and taking it from our retirement contributions, which are one of the reasons I chose to come to work at Cornell in the first place, is very worrisome, to me. This is also on top of the real-terms paycut we took when SIP was suspended (not to mention a halt in career advancement with the promotion freeze). The effective paycut here is around an eighth of our real-terms remuneration for the coming year.

Staff pay and community discussion on rent

Submitted by Anonymous Student Role on Thu, 2020-06-11 13:18 (user name hidden)

I understand the need to reduce the pay of staff and faculty during this hard time, however, is Cornell also working with the community and surrounding areas regarding cost of living? Due to the presence of both Cornell and Ithaca College, rent prices do not match salaries as is. If employees who are already on the receiving end of a lower band (C or lower) have their pay reduced, the ability to pay rent and live within the Ithaca area will be greatly impacted.

students with disabilities

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 12:41 (user name hidden)

Can you share what the university is doing to support student with learning disabilities IF courses continue to be virtual?

Students on campus

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 12:38 (user name hidden)

As a parent of two current students we hope classes return to campus and also understand the concern over the spread of the virus. However, upperclassmen have leases and so many of them stayed IN Ithaca this spring with plans of returning to Ithaca no matter what happens with the classes. Something I think Cornell has little control over. I think the university needs to consider aggressive testing methods in preparation for them returning and staying on campus.

Plan for outbreak of covid 19

Submitted by Denise R. Ward on Thu, 2020-06-11 12:16

My biggest concern is about the plan to accommodate and react to another outbreak in Ithaca when the student are in their resident halls and college town. I hope that we have a plan to make space for isolation and handling ill students.

I am also interested in how we are safeguarding the virus being brought to Ithaca.

CURP Hiatus

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Thu, 2020-06-11 12:05 (user name hidden)

Dear Cornell Leadership,

I wanted to express my concern with receiving both a salary freeze and a CURP hiatus. The combination of suspending a 2.5% SIP and 10% CURP is going to have real impact on our families. I would consider all other options before cutting the CURP. Thanks for allowing us to share our thoughts.

Thank you.

Enterprise Furloughs

Submitted by Brandon Fortenberry on Thu, 2020-06-11 12:03

I would like to echo my comments that were made in the video and implore the University to seek alternative options to furloughs for Enterprise units. This option is especially difficult to hear when you consider that at this time there is no information that would lead me to believe furloughed employees in the fall will receive additional assistance to make it through the furlough timeframe.

Sent directly via email to EA – Contact Form

Submitted by Carol Schulsler on Thu, 2020-06-11 11:0912:03

I just watched the 6/9 meeting video (which I don't think most employees are aware of). I am very against the idea of suspending retirement contribution for one year. Because it's not something that would impact an employee NOW, most wouldn't realize how much they would be sacrificing (10% of salary PLUS growth which depending upon how young they are could be even more significant). This would also set a precedent which I'd be afraid Cornell would use again in the future.

I also agree with the EA member comment that there are many unnecessary positions. The employee to student ratio is very high especially when you consider positions left out of CU stats like temps, temp agencies, contracted employees, etc. Many of these positions don't even benefit the students.

Keeping and paying positions that have nothing to do during Covid-19 has been very frustrating to someone like me whom is working AND having to use my own saved time (HAP or VAC) whenever I need a break yet those other positions don't have to.

Alternative to cuts in retirement contributions

Submitted by Kara Bugis on Wed, 2020-06-10 13:49

Could it be left to employees to decide if they would prefer the 10% retirement contribution cut or choose a comparable temporary salary cut? A 9% cut in salary and receiving a retirement contribution at the reduced salary is almost nearly the same direct cost savings of 10% per salaried individual to the university. This allows employees to decide how their money is best invested and how it affects their income brackets for tax and other purposes.

Working remote to offset-on campus expenses?

Submitted by Anonymous authenticated user on Tue, 2020-06-09 16:22 (user name hidden)

Is there a chance that staff working remote can stay working remote to offset additional costs in being on campus (electricity, office supplies, heat/air conditioning etc.)?

Idea for additional income

Submitted by Julianne Theresa Hunter on Tue, 2020-06-09 16:11

Will there be open space in Residence Halls? Could we try to get some students who might be looking at off-campus housing and get them to stay on campus to bring in additional income?
