

HEI HEI DEPEW: Welcome, everyone to the Employee Assembly education panel discussion. I am Hei Hei Depew, the chair of the Employee Assembly. Staff have expressed through the priorities poll that they would like to learn more about Cornell's educational opportunities. And I'm grateful to our panelists today for joining us to discuss these opportunities, provide some helpful information.

I also want to introduce and thank Jessica Withers, the chair of the Employee Assembly Education Committee, who has been integral in planning and organizing today's events. Jessica will be moderating today's panel discussion. So I wanted to introduce her. And take it away, Jessica.

JESSICA WITHERS: Thank you, Hei Hei. Hi, everyone. Thanks for joining us today. Along with Hei Hei, I do want to thank those who filled out our priorities poll in the fall. As I'm the chair of the Education Committee, I was really pleased to note there were a good number of responses that indicated appreciation for the educational benefits we have as employees at Cornell. People were particularly appreciative in this time of working from home and limited budgets.

Since the Education Committee had already been discussing a way to bring together the wide variety of education benefits, we felt this was the perfect topic to begin our new season of staff forums. So our panelists today will introduce themselves and explain the education benefits that fall under their purview. We've collected some thoughts from staff ahead of time, and the panelists may address those as well.

Or we'll get to them when we get to the Q&A. If you have questions throughout, please put them in the Q&A feature of Zoom, and Michelle LoParco, executive vice chair of the Employee Assembly will present them after the panelists have spoken.

So to begin, I'd like to welcome Mary Opperman, vice president and chief human resources officer. Mary?

MARY OPPERMAN: Thank you, Jessica, and thank you all for coming. I'd also like to begin 2021 with a special thank you to the Employee Assembly. They are always a wonderful partner, and they are very concerned with making sure they know what your issues are and then bringing them forward so that we can try to address them together. I'm not going to say too, too much today, because the experts on the educational benefits are here, and you'll learn much more from them.

But I did want an opportunity to say happy new year. 2021 is beginning. Keep in mind that we are days are getting longer. Get outside if you can. The weather's been fairly moderate. And take good care of yourself.

I think sometimes, when we take the time to clear our minds-- maybe a walk, or a run, or a slow saunter, helps us to think about what's really important to us and what we'd like to learn more

about. And being at home, I think, is a perfect time to try to understand what your educational benefits are and maybe dip your toe in the water a little bit.

And so with that, I'm going to turn it over to the experts and begin with Kathy Burkgren. Kathy?

KATHY BURKGREN: Thank you, Mary Hi I'm Kathy Burkgren. I'm AVP of organizational development and effectiveness.

Next, we're going to talk about spring training offerings offered remotely or online through organizational development and effectiveness on behalf of the Division of Human Resources. First, we're excited. If you could advance the next slide. We're excited about a new seven-module leadership curriculum. The certificate courses are 1.5 to 2 hours each.

As leaders and the way we define leadership at Cornell is that we are all leaders, no matter our role. And in that, we are called to continually evolve, to inspire and execute. So the way in which we lead calls for a new approach. In this curriculum, the focus is going to be on conscious leaders who use emotional intelligence to unleash the power of their teams and to create and maintain highly functional teams, either as a team member or as a positional leader.

We'll explore what it means to see around corners, navigate the work life journey, and coach for performance, whether you're coaching your supervisor, a colleague, whomever it might be. This practice is available to everyone, staff and supervisors, because it touches on the skills needed to lead, whether it's projects, programs, committees, or daily work.

Next, I think we have the wrong slides up. Yeah, there we go. Next, leading in these times includes-- is there the next slide? There should be like seven. Yeah, there we go. Meeting in these times includes three courses-- the changing landscape of work looks at how work is changing on what we need to evolve and the importance of building connections as we're doing that.

Given we are all called to work differently, we look at the importance of recognizing, developing, and moving talent around to create challenge, excitement, and achievement, as well as belonging and how each of us can help do that and have it be a good experience for all. Because it is about recognizing and capitalizing on the talent that each of us has within us.

Building trust is two courses. The first is what is needed to establish trust in work groups, and then what's the value of trust for creating belonging? Communication is four courses. They include managing and facilitating meetings, both in person as well as online, effective listening, giving and receiving feedback, and the skill of having difficult conversations, which can happen in any role that we're in.

Emotional intelligence is a seven-course track. Like any skill, we can develop emotional intelligence, and given it is a high priority, and a top leadership skill, and it is valued by our senior leaders, this is something that you may want to check out. And it's also something that

we can build. Employee engagement focuses on what it means to be engaged, and how we can ensure that we are engaged, and how we can ensure that we're helping others be engaged.

Tips for Effective Communication covers facilitation skills and includes tips to facilitate bias-free, as well as how to facilitate in challenging situations. When you complete leader as a coach, the goal is that you will be using coaching skills at work, in your community, at home to increase the effectiveness of yourself as well as those around you.

Another new offering is the project management and implementation course. This course is designed for a person who has either led projects or who hasn't led any at all. Two certified project managers, Carrie Susskind from research and Chris O'Brien from human resource information systems, are working with us to develop and deliver this course.

This, too, is a highly desired skill across the university and by senior leaders, so it's also worth considering. And we don't have a date on that yet we're still in the design phase.

Performance at Cornell are courses that are going to be added to the calendar this week. And as the other courses that I've referenced, they're also available through CU Learn.

And the following colleges and units have asked for training specifically within their college or unit-- Alumni Affairs and Development, the College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Human Ecology, Law, Johnson College of Business. Those will be delivered by Tanya Grove, as well as the ones that are offered openly to the community.

Next, the Supervisor Development Program is a certificate program for those aspiring to be supervisors, supervisors, or anyone learning more about supervision. The content combines supervising at Cornell online content that was developed by organizational development effectiveness subject matter experts across campus and 3.5 of days offerings broken out into absorbable sessions. It provides participants with proven fundamental skills to become effective and successful supervisors.

Next, I wanted to mention that our in-person leadership programs that many of you may know about-- the Harold D. Craft Leadership Program, Turning Point, Building Teams, and Leading Change in Developing Facilitation Skills are all experiential and interactive. And they include case studies and simulations that make it challenging to convert to a room remotely, which is why we developed the other leadership curriculum I talked about first, in the interim, while we can't be in the room.

And so we've had many inquiries about these and when these programs will resume. And my response to that is when it's such that we can get into a room and sit closer than six feet apart. So I don't think any of us have the answer on that yet. So more to come.

Next, I was asked to talk about the veterans' education benefits. Cornell University is a veteran-friendly employer, attracting highly talented individuals, people who are or have served in the

military, ROTC-- the Reserves and the National Guard bring a unique perspective to the university, and we want to recognize that. Whether you enter Cornell University as a student staff or a faculty member, you have much to offer Cornell, and Cornell has much to offer you.

Given this, Cornell provides veteran benefits to full or part-time Cornell students who are active duty or reserve military personnel veterans, or in some cases, the child or spouse of a veteran. Cornell participates in the GI Bill, and you can see the internet link there.

Cornell is a yellow ribbon institution, and that is a supplement to the post-9/11 GI Bill. Again, there's a phone number or two emails there for more information. And lastly, Cornell supports veterans through many departments and benefits. And you can get involved through the Veterans' Colleague Network group.

Other financial aid for veterans includes the Warrior scholarship program, or WSP. It offers immersive academic workshops free of charge to enlisted veterans, providing them with a skill bridge that enables a successful transition from the battlefield to the classroom. And there's more information that can be had about each of these programs.

Farm Ops is the Northeast Beginning Farmers Project, which offers resources and training for military veterans interested in farming and joining an agricultural community. And lastly, Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans and Disabilities is offered to Cornell's school of Hotel Administration. It welcomes military veterans with service-related disabilities. And this program is provided at no cost to veterans who are developing entrepreneurial businesses. And so for more information, you can either call or contact the numbers there.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to Paul Krause, vice provost for external education in eCornell

PAUL KRAUSE: Hey, everybody. I don't have any slides, so we can hide the slide deck for now. So one of the great things about being an employee at Cornell University is the very wide range of education options that are available. And I would encourage everybody to explore the options.

For those that don't know, eCornell is part of Cornell University that reaches external audiences. And a lot of what we do is very much professional training for individuals that are looking to advance their career, as well as going into organizations. And helping develop skills within those organizations on topics ranging from leadership, to programming, to marketing, to machine learning, you name it. And what's great for Cornell employees is that you have access to all of these things that eCornell does.

So there's two primary categories. If you go to the site that outlines the training available to Cornell employees, one is called On-Demand Lessons and the other is Certificate Courses and Overall Online Certificates. On-demand lessons are free to everybody. And these are great, one-hour modules that cover a wide range of topics.

And it's great for both if you're just looking to up your skills or reference something quickly. It's a great way to explore what you might be interested and upgrade your skills in any one topic area. And so that's available on CU Learn.

And I think there's a link in the upper right corner of the CU Learn to drop down and look for eCornell on-demand lessons. And you can explore that and see some of the great options that Cornell makes available to professionals around the world. And it's all available free to Cornell employees.

There's also Cornell certificate programs. And those are offered, I believe, at a cost for most Cornell employees. Sometimes that's a cost that's reimbursed by the department, sometimes it's not. It's based on more departmental policies. And I'm sure there's others on this call that can speak more clearly about that. But online certificate programs are expert-lead. They typically take three to nine months to complete. So they're a little bit more intense than the on-demand lessons.

They also have projects. Most of the projects are those that you can apply on the job as part of the overall learning. And I would encourage everybody to take a look at it if interested in any of the certificate programs to learn more. They're definitely high-end training programs, and I think a good complement to the things Kathryn just outlined as far as leadership training options available at Cornell.

So I pause there and see if there's any questions on the eCornell offerings. Or if anybody wants to add anything about eCornell. Are there any questions?

HEI HEI DEPEW: Typically reserve questions for the end, so we're going to move on to the next person.

PAUL KRAUSE: Great.

HEI HEI DEPEW: Michelle La Fave?

MICHELLE LA FAVE: All in, welcome. And I'd like to thank the Employee Assembly for the opportunity to share this information on the employee programs that are available, the education programs available to employees.

So my name is Michelle La Fave, and I'm a benefits associate in the benefits services administration for our HR division. I administer the education programs, which include the employee degree program, which we're going to discuss today.

But we also have other programs, which someone asked for. We're going to talk about the children's benefit, which is the CCTS. We're not going to touch on that today, but you can visit our website, or feel free to contact me if you have more questions about that.

So the Employee Degree Program, which is referred to as EDP more often than not, is for employees who are seeking a degree at Cornell. And to qualify for the Employee Degree Program, you have to be a non-academic employee or a non-professorial academic staff in a benefits-eligible position.

You must complete one year of employment prior to the start of classes. And if at the time of EDP application, you are in part-time status, you must have completed one year of full-time service with the university.

The degree you're seeking must be job-related or Cornell career-related, and your supervisor's approval is needed to apply for the Employee Degree Program as well as to register for classes each semester. So you'll be sure to have to discuss this with your supervisor to get the approval of the supervisor.

If you're pursuing an undergraduate degree with Cornell, it's non-taxable, while if you're pursuing a graduate-level degree, they're taxable under the section 127 in the IRS tax code. And when in the graduate level of the EDP program, you're not allowed to accept internal or external stipends or fellowships.

So the process for applying for the Employee Degree Program-- you will have to apply first to the college you're trying to enroll in for that program. And once you're accepted, then you would forward your employee degree application to us, along with a copy of your acceptance letter. And we can process that and get you into the program.

EDP allows for an open-ended graduation date for most of its programs that aren't structured, which means you're not confined to the traditional possible two years or four years for the program. You take courses at your pace when allowed.

And because your priority is first to be an employee, we understand sometimes work obligations or even life and family obligations prevent you from registering for classes each semester. So just so you're aware, while in EDP, you are not required to register for classes each semester, unless you're in a structured program that requires that.

One thing that we get a lot of questions on and a lot of inquiries about is online programs. Because those folks who cannot attend on campus classes, for instance, those in New York City, are interested in a program but have some limitations on what they can do. So as a part of the EDP program right now, we have available the MBA programs, which are the eMBA Americas and the Metro program offered by the Johnson School.

There's also the online executive master's in ILR, the executive master's in health administration, which is the online loan program offered by the School of Human Ecology, and the master's in professional studies in New York City and IOR.

Now, one program that was recently added to our EDP roster is the master of science in legal studies, offered by the law school. This is not a JD, this is not a juris doctorate, a law degree, but it's a master's degree that gives you some insight into law studies. So that's a new program that has been available through EDP.

If you need more information, you're curious, and you just want to know about what the EDP benefit is, as well as any other benefits available in the education section, you can visit our website at hr.cornell.edu. And under the Benefits, Pay, and Perks section, you can navigate to the education benefits, and there, you'll see everything that we have available.

You can also feel free to email me directly. And I'll be happy to schedule time with you or answer questions by email. And my email address is met27, met27@cornell.edu. So please feel free to send any questions off or just to get any information you'd like to get about the education benefits that are available Thanks.

ANNALISA RAYMER: I think I'm next now. So I'm Annalisa Raymer. And I am speaking about CLASP. And I have some slides. Jessica are you going to bring the slides? OK. Not those. Anyway, I'll just talk then. Unless you'd like me to put my slides up myself.

Anyway, the CLASP program started about 30-plus years ago, and it began as a literacy program. And it is a unique program amongst social offerings at Cornell in that it is a partnership between Cornell students who are taking courses in education in adult and lifelong learning, or in English to speakers of other languages, and employees.

So it's set up so that employees who want to pursue an educational goal are then paired with a Cornell student who's taking education courses. And it's a co-learning, mutual learning kind of situation, where the students are charged with reporting on what they're learning from their adult partner, and the adult partner is given support in terms of educational mentoring from the students. So the adult is in charge of picking their own learning.

And sometimes, these are things related, such as computer basics or computer productivity and office suites. Sometimes, it's professional growth, such as halal cooking or photography. And sometimes it's personal development. So we really get a range of things.

People who apply for the CLASP program at the start of the semester-- and I'll put into the chat the place where you can send yourself or your employees to apply to CLASP. And the employees that we can serve every semester depends somewhat on the number of students who enroll in our courses.

Among the courses we offer is Intro to Adult and Lifelong Learning and Design Notation of Adult Lifelong Learning. And we are piloting a course that my colleague Sasha Endo is teaching for learning how to [INAUDIBLE] other languages. And we hope to make that a permanent course, too.

So the types of things that people often apply for are learning English better or practicing English and the computer courses. But like I mentioned, we also try to serve whatever people ask for. So it's one person, one employee, one student paired. They meet once a week for eight to nine weeks.

Some people do it on the clock, depending on the supervisor's ability to provide that time. Some people do it on their own time. And some people do it if they're up. I'll put some links into the chat so that you can find out more information. We do prioritize service employees and UAW members. So those employees get first consideration. If schedules don't work out or if we have more students, then other people are welcome to join us.

I will mention, too, that I often welcome people into the university academic courses. So it's not infrequent for staff members and colleagues to take courses. OK so yes. We'll just run through my slides. I think I've said everything I wanted to say. And the last one just has the link on it put into the chat.

Now, I think the next person up is Emily Ivory from Continuing Ed.

EMILY IVORY: Yes and I have slides. All right. Hi, everybody. I'm Emily Ivory, and I'm the registrar and student services manager for the School of Continuing Education and summer sessions. Excuse me. I'm happy to be able to share some information with you about part-time study for employees and retirees through the School of Continuing Ed.

Part-time study differs from EDP in that you are taking a class or classes outside of a Cornell degree program. I've included links to websites that will provide lots of information to get you started. The HR website contains a detailed list of eligibility based on employment status. So this is a great first step if you're interested in taking a class.

On the HR website, you'll also find information regarding release time for work, the tuition waiver, FAQs, and a link to enrollment instructions on our website, the SCE website. The link to the SCE webpage for part time study contains some general information and links to academic calendars and class rosters, where you can search for classes of interest.

The second link will take you to the registration page for Cornell employees and retirees. This registration page contains detailed instructions for enrollment, obtaining permission from appropriate individuals, including an email template that you can use when reaching out to your supervisor, and a link to submit your enrollment request online.

Those of you who have enrolled through SCE before may remember our paper enrollment form, which we'll no longer be using. Eligible employees may have up to four credits of tuition waived per semester, and retirees may have up to six credits waived. Employees and retirees may take classes in the fall and spring semesters, but also in the winter or summer sessions.

The fall and spring terms are a full 15 weeks. The winter session is a condensed three-week session, with full classes completed in that time frame. The summer term contains several different sessions. Three separate three-week sessions, one six-week, and one eight-week.

There are some classes that meet outside the standard schedule as well. Generally, the shorter the class, the more intensive you can expect the work and time commitment to be. All employees must obtain approval from their direct supervisor and the head of their department before they can be enrolled in a class. Approval from either the instructor of the department or the registrar for the class is also required. You'll find a list of the approval type for each college on the SCE employee registration page.

Now that I've run through the technical information, I'd like to mention that taking a class at Cornell, or more than one, is a wonderful opportunity to explore new interests or delve more deeply into current ones. Taking classes at Cornell has the potential to provide you with valuable professional and personal development.

I know staff members who have taken painting classes, horticulture classes, computer science classes, and more. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience available to you through part-time study.

So how can SCE help you take advantage of this opportunity? I've provided our email address in the slide, and hope that you'll reach out to us if you have questions. We'd also love to hear about your experience. When you participate in a class, you'll receive prompts to complete an evaluation as it nears its conclusion. However, we also encourage you to send an email or reach out to schedule an appointment to chat with us.

It's important to us to make the benefit of part-time study available to all eligible employees, so please don't hesitate to contact us if you're not sure where to start, or not sure what to expect, or have other concerns or questions. SCE is an annual sponsor of Cornell's Staff Development Day, so when we fully return to campus, you'll find us there, too.

Finally, I'd like to share some recent enrollment numbers for employees participating in part-time study. This past fall, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we had 135 employees enrolled for classes. And this winter, 30 employees are finishing up their winter session classes, which will end this week. Thank you for joining us today, and I look forward to working with you to meet your educational goals.

JESSICA WITHERS: I think I'm going to transfer us over to the question and answer part. So I'm going to start talking. And I think video will catch up to us. I do want to say that last summer, I took one of those three-week summer classes with the School of Continuing Ed and that was intense, very intense, but I'm glad I did it. So lots of good information.

One thing that I did see in the chat is questions about if this will be recorded, and yes it will. We'll host it on the Employee Assembly website, just as we do all the other staff forums. And I imagine we'll have the slides there as well.

So question and answer time. Are we ready to bring Michelle in to help us with questions that have come in during the session?

MICHELLE LOPARCO: I'm here. I'm ready. Got quite a list of questions. And I'm just going to start right at the top with a question from Joseph. Joseph has a doctorate degree, but would like to study HR.

Given that he has a terminal degree in my discipline, may I pursue another bachelors from Cornell? And this is a question that came up not only here on our Q&A, but through the responses to the Qualtrics poll. So if there's someone that can answer that question for these folks, that would be great.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: Hi, Michelle, so I will answer the question with regard to taking a second or additional bachelor's degree. So if you've been conferred a bachelor's degree already, unfortunately the EDP program does not allow for a second bachelor's degree. Although you can do additional graduate degrees. This is more to the effort of allowing more people to enroll and earn bachelor's degrees.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Right. I think there was some questions about some of the courses and the cost. I tried to respond to what I knew in the Q&A to folks. The leadership courses are on CU Learn, and those are available to staff. But I think that people are looking for some clarification, especially when it comes to eCornell certificate programs. What the cost for staff is full-rate, full-fare, or if they're free. So if someone can answer.

PAUL KRAUSE: Yeah. So again, there's two different parts. For eCornell courses and certificate programs, there is a very discounted rate for Cornell employees. That's \$100 per course. And certificate programs have a different number of courses. A typical one might be six courses, so that would be about \$600 for the certificate program.

If you just go to the site, you're going to see prices in the \$3,000 range, so it's a very, very deep discount overall. I should note, just because there's oftentimes some confusion-- available for free are on-demand lessons. So there is a, I'll call it a light version, or something you can go through and actually go through a number of the videos and a number of topics on demand that are free and available on CU Learn that I would strongly recommend everybody check out. But if you want to get the certificate and go through the entire experience, there is a very discounted rate.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great, thank you. So we have a question about the Emerging Leaders Program and whether or not that will take place for 2021. And if so, will it be remote?

KATHY BURKGREN: I am not aware if it is or is not happening. I don't know if anybody else is.

MARY OPPERMAN: Can you just repeat the question?

MICHELLE LOPARCO: It's the IT Emerging Leaders Program.

MARY OPPERMAN: So we'll get that answer. We don't have somebody here, I think, to.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Next question up is will this presentation speak to education benefits for staff's children?

MICHELLE LA FAVE: So the program we're referring to is the Cornell Children's Tuition Scholarship which is what this question is referring to. We usually have a presentation in April with regard to the CCTS program, so stay tuned for that. But if you would like-- to the person asking the question, please feel free to reach out to me, Michelle La Fave, met27. And I can give you guidance and help you understand the program more.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great, thank you. This might be too specific, and I'm pretty sure I will have to do some homework on my own. Is there any pharmacy technician certification course at Cornell?

MARY OPPERMAN: I'm not aware of one, but I think that-- I'm not aware of one. I don't know if anybody else is, but if we did have it, it would probably be associated with the Medical College. But I'm not sure.

PAUL KRAUSE: Sean Nicholson has, I think, a one-credit course on pharma management that was also a certificate, but it was done in a live fashion, so I don't know that there's another one scheduled. But I know that it's not really a technician course, but it's a great pharma management overview.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Right. How strict is the eligibility regarding length of employment? For example, if the person began work at Cornell on September 15, and classes for 2020 begin in just a few days before their one-year anniversary, are they eligible to take classes?

MICHELLE LA FAVE: So the one year requirement is part of the legislation. In keeping the program and administration consistent, we do as much as we can to stick to the one-year requirement. Cases can be reviewed, but in order for consistency, the one-year completion and full-time employment at Cornell is one of the requirements. So classes starting a few days after you've started-- sorry, prior to when you started may cut you off for the semester you're trying to start in.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. For the EDP program-- Michelle, maybe you can answer. Who determines, if you're interested in an area of study, if it's career-related or Cornell career-related. And how directly related does it need to be?

MICHELLE LA FAVE: So this determination is mostly between the employee and the supervisor, which is why supervisor approval is needed. You can also have discussions with your HR rep. But the conversations should first start with the supervisor, determining how enrolling and completing the degree can help you in your position, whether it's staying in the same position or acquiring another position in your department. But the conversation should be had with your supervisor first.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. Kara has a question on the Supervisor Development Program that was launched. Is it available to employees in New York City? Is it virtual or just in-person?

KATHY BURKGREN: It is available in-person it will be coming out in March and/or early April.

MICHELL LOPARCO: Great. Patricia has a question of whether some or all of the benefits apply to retired or part-time staff.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: So for the EDP, retirees are not eligible. But there are other benefits, like the part-time study, which are available to retirees. And so Patricia, I believe you said, can contact our office to find out what is available as a retiree.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. I'm just going in order on the Q&A. I'm trying to not skip around. So the next question is from Susie. And this is a tuition tax credit question. I'm not sure if we do have anyone on the call that is able to speak to that. But the question is, can you explain the tuition tax credits for the CCTS? She says, we recently were told by the IRS they were not valid.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: Susie, if you can contact me directly, we can try to answer that question for you as it relates to CCTS and taxes.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. So the next question is is there a way to improve the registration process to classes through the SCE? I understand students get priority. They should. But we can only register on the first day of classes. And many times at that point, there is no room, and it is hard to find a new class and get all the approvals at that point.

EMILY IVORY: Yes, that is true. And it's been a response to the pandemic. So we've been required to only enroll at SCE part-time students on the first day of class so that all of the students who are obtaining their degrees are able to get into the classes that they need. This started last semester, when pre-enroll was very condensed for current matriculated students. And there was still a lot of confusion when they were adding classes.

So at this point it's a little more focused on current undergrads, but from what I understand, in the future, we will be able to enroll part-time students prior to the first day of class. We will always, of course, prioritize matriculated students. But I think we can reach more of a compromise once we're back on campus.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: The next question is from Cardinal, and it's from my job. I've been told that I have to obtain the instructor's permission. But especially nowadays, I've been having trouble with professors responding. What is one way to ensure a timely response from an instructor?

EMILY IVORY: That's kind of a tricky question. Usually, my advice is to be as concise and brief as possible when writing to an instructor. And it really depends on the person. Some people really appreciate a reminder or two, because everybody gets so much email. So don't be reluctant to send a second or third email if you need to. Most of the time, it's just a matter of getting to it. And then sometimes, if you're really having trouble, let us know and we might be able to help you.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. The next question-- this might be for you, Paul. Do you accept Americorps Segal, Americorps's education award, for any expense that that may occur? For example, for eCornell certificate program. It's a federally awarded award for Americorps service members.

PAUL KRAUSE: I will need to consult with somebody on that. I know that we've had conversations on this, but I don't know the details. But if you send me an email, I'd be happy to explore what our options are.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great.

PAUL KRAUSE: Clearly, we're eager to support Americorps.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: The next one is is there assistance in understanding the transition from SCE into EDP, and what are the requirements?

MICHELLE LA FAVE: So this question is an important question and a good question. Courses taken through the School of Continuing Ed are taken not with matriculation into a program. And so if someone has been taking courses for the past few semesters or whatever the case may be, looking to earn a degree, they must be aware that they have to apply to the school they're trying to earn that degree into in order to have it matriculated to earn that degree.

And then subsequently, to apply to the EDP program. And one big discussion that they need to have when they're applying to the school is what courses will be transferred. So not all courses are transferable. And not all schools accept every credit that has been done through the School of Continuing Education.

And so bearing that in mind, when considering the courses you're going to take in the School of Continuing Ed towards the degree, you should be mindful of having that discussion with the school that you're trying to earn a degree through. I'm not sure, Emily, if you have anything to add to that.

EMILY IVORY: Not really, except for each school and program is different. So yeah, there may be an opportunity to transfer some of that credit in. But maybe not. It really depends on the program.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Super. Eric asks if you could address auditing classes versus taking them for a grade.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: This may be another one possibly EDP related. So if you are enrolled in the course, matriculated into the program, and accepted into the EDP program, there is the option to audit courses rather than take them for a grade. So I would ask Eric to contact me directly--met27-- and I can help provide information on that.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. And in that same vein, are PhD courses available for EDP.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: Yes they are. It will depend on the course you're taking in the school. But yes, they are available.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Super. So if Cornell does not offer a program related to our work area, can we receive support for graduate-level coursework at other local or online institution, for example, academic counseling and higher education administration.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: The answer varies. The program that you would look into for assistance is the Tuition Aid Program. And the degree you're taking elsewhere should be job-related. And so again, feel free to contact me or our office for more information on that. Or visit our website. But the option is there. It will depend on the program you're taking, yes.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: And I think this next question is sort of in that same vein as well. And what kind of partnerships, if any, does Cornell share with any local institutions for employee education?

MICHELLE LA FAVE: So any degrees taken outside of Cornell would utilize the Tuition Aid Program. And so that would be the partnership. There are a few with CUNY schools. But if you can contact our office directly, I can provide you with information on the options.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. Denise asks, if you took an eCornell certificate course, but did not finish one course on time, do you need to pay again for that missing course? Would you be able to help us out with that, Paul?

PAUL KRAUSE: So this was for an eCornell course?

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Yes, an eCornell certificate program, and made it through all the way, except for one-- wasn't able to finish one class.

PAUL KRAUSE: I don't really know if there's a variation for Cornell employees. But the standard policy, I believe, is that we give people a couple of chances to complete it without a fee. But then if someone doesn't complete a third time, then there's a change fee.

So just recognizing that everybody's busy, and sometimes work and life get in the way of actually completing something. Try to make it easy to shift. But also, there has to be a line at some point so that it's not abused. Because it does take up a seat in that small cohort.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great.

PAUL KRAUSE: So I believe you get two chances to reschedule. But certainly, I may be slightly wrong. But I believe that's the case.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Super. Susan asks if there are online soft skill classes in MSM office or on another type of software.

KATHY BURKGREN: For that one, I would have to go to, I believe, IT. I don't know the exact answer to that. I know there's different courses that you can get that are free. But I would go to IT.

PAUL KRAUSE: I believe LinkedIn learning and Skillsoft would both have courses in those topics.

KATHY BURKGREN: Yes.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Kelly asks if the EDP program limited to those executive programs that they've mentioned. Or is it open to all/most master's degree programs.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: Kelly, there are a variety of programs available, not only the executive ones that were mentioned. Those are online courses that are available, but there are courses available throughout the various colleges of the university for master-level degrees. She can contact our office or me directly. Or she can contact the graduate school. And they will be able to give her guidance on what master's courses are available, programs.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Great. And I've seen this question several times in chat and Q&A and also in the responses. Is the eCornell courses or the EDP courses are available to Cornell Cooperative Extension staff?

PAUL KRAUSE: ECornell, the answer is yes. The same is available to all employees.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: And then, would the \$100 per on-demand course also apply as well? So to be clear, the on-demand lessons are free. I guess if you have access to CU Learn, then that would be part of that. So anybody that has access to the other CU Learn resources, like LinkedIn Learning and Skillsoft would presumably have access to the on-demand lessons. The \$100 per certificate course-- yes, I think that applies to Extension staff as well.

MICHELLE LA FAVE: The answer to the EDP section is yes, they are allowed.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: OK. And I think we already answered the question about PhD courses available through EDP. Paul, could you share the link for the eCornell on-demand classes, please? I think we can share it. I think I've actually shared that in chat. So that was already shared in our chat.

PAUL KRAUSE: If someone could put the deep link in the CU Learn, because it's actually-- on-demand lessons are integrated directly into CU Learn. So as you take those lessons, it's tracked within CU Learn. And anyone can actually use CU Learn capabilities to access and check. And there is also a link that we can share for the certificate programs. It's sort of a landing page, which I can also share.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Let's see. This could be a Mary Opperman question. Could you explain how time release for taking courses would work?

MICHELLE LA FAVE: Mary, I'll jump in first, and then I'll allow you to answer if there's more you want to add. So time release is a discussion between the employee and the supervisor. So we know that sometimes people are allowed to leave work and go attend classes. And then after discussion with their supervisor, it may be that they make the time up if they are non-exempt or their work is done otherwise. But there is no steadfast rule that says when you're in class, it's considered time worked. It is a discussion and an agreement between the employee and the supervisor.

MARY OPPERMAN: Thanks, Michelle. Obviously, we're trying to balance our desire to have people continue their education with our responsibility to both get our work done and also the impact that our absences have on our peers. So if you begin that conversation with the supervisor, if you get stuck, go to your local HR officer for some assistance.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: Right. I'm going to finish up with this one last question. Can there be advisement offered to SCE individuals? We are out there on a limb by ourselves.

EMILY IVORY: Absolutely, yes. Please reach out. I'm happy to talk with anyone. The assistant registrar, Amy, is also very willing. So yeah, please reach out.

MICHELLE LOPARCO: OK. And then let's see. Jessica-- this just came in. I'm going to share this information. Clarification-- the executive MBA Americas and executive MBA Metro New York programs are not online programs. And then she provides some information. So I will put that also in chat for anyone who is requesting clarification on those particular programs.

And I think that wraps up all of our questions generated online. And I know that responses from the panel discussion were shared with the group. So if folks are still looking for answers. Again, as Jessica said, we will post this presentation, slides, and the recording on the Employee Assembly website. And I'm going to hand it back over to, I believe, Mary.

MARY OPPERMAN: Sorry about that. So thank you all for coming. So as you can see, as is often the case, things are a little complicated in terms of how to access these benefits. And that's because they have to serve a large number of people and we're balancing a lot of priorities. But as someone who used the degree program, once you get into it, it makes a lot more sense.

So I hope that this has given you a sense of the possible. If you haven't been in classes for a while, starting with those Cornell on-demand courses is a great way to get your feet wet. I will say, there's a lot of terrific classes in those on-demand courses. So take a look and see what you find interesting. It's a great way to learn about something you've always wondered about. And many of them are bite-sized, and so you can do them in a fairly contained time.

Same thing is true for supervising at Cornell. If you are a supervisor or you want to be a supervisor, it's a terrific way to learn about that. Just a reminder, too, you as employees-- there's the diversity and inclusion programs. We're up to three of the six. And I think the fourth is coming very shortly, if it hasn't already.

Those you'll need to factor into your learning plan. They're great programs, a great way to dive into your own views and your own understandings, and advance our collective experience and commitment to a truly open environment where all of our workforce is encouraged and safe to thrive.

So I did want to just say that it is 2021, and we're looking forward with optimism to the rest of this year. The vaccine is out, but in very limited supply. And cases are up. So in the meantime, I know we're all anxious to get past this.

I want to encourage you all, again, to do the things we know keep you safe. Limit your outside activities. Not outside-outdoors, but out of your home activities. When you are outside of your home or with people you don't know, your mask is your best friend. And be very careful about close contact.

I am confident that we will get through this. I said this to you now, for I'm not sure you all believe me anymore. But we are going to get through this. And the way that we're going to get through it is a shared commitment to our health and safety.

And I want to thank you all for everything that you're doing. And I'm going to turn this back over-- is it to Jessica or to Hei Hei?

JESSICA WITHERS: I'm going to wrap up, Mary. Thank you very much. That was a lot of information and a lot of resources. So I want to thank our panelists and everyone who helped put this panel together today. I also want to thank the audience for attending and asking all of your great questions. There's a lot of ways to use these education benefits. So please look at them. And I encourage you to find the ones that help support your learning goals.

So take care, everyone. Be well. And we'll see you next time.