

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much. Okay, so let's begin. So good evening, everyone. My name is David Dunham and I'm a PhD candidate in German studies and President of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly. It's my pleasure to welcome you all today to the student elected trustee candidate forum. After, as a delay in this year's election due in COVID 19, we now have four candidates running for the position of student elected trustees.

Afua Asantewaa, an MBA student. Vince Hartman, a Master's student at Cornell Tech. Liz Davis-Frost, also a Master's student, and Jeff Pea, a PhD student. In today's forum, candidates will each have about 2 and 1/2 minutes for opening statements. Then I will ask the candidates a series of questions that I have fielded from the GPSA, and each person will have about two minutes to respond to each question.

About halfway through the forum I'll ask three questions of my own. And then I will open up the discussion to the audience. So please prepare your questions by posting them in the Q&A function when I give you the word to do so. For each question, I will call upon each candidate to speak in a different order, such that everyone has a fair chance of giving the first and final response to a question.

And lastly, when our time is up, I'll ask the candidates to make some very brief closing remarks. And before I forget, voting will take place from October 30th to November 4th, so please be on the lookout for voting instructions as the date gets closer. Okay, and without further ado, let's begin with opening statements. Let's begin with Liz. Could you please introduce yourself?

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Hey, everybody. Thanks for coming out today to this forum. My name is Liz Davis-Frost, I use she/her pronouns. Like David said, I'm here as an MPA student. I'm getting masters of public administration. I recently graduated Cornell undergrad in May, so I was class of 2020. And I'm just excited to be able to run for this position and have the potential to be able to possibly serve the Cornell community for four more years.

During undergrad, I was involved in various student organizing spaces such as Consent Ed and the gender justice Advocacy Coalition. I did mostly sexual violence prevention and gender equity work, but was involved among various identity-based boards as well. So, yeah, I'm excited to do this forum and to get to know y'all virtually today through your questions and-- yeah.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much, Liz. Next, let's hear from Jeff.

JEFF PEA: Hi everyone. My name is Jeff. I use he/him pronouns. I'm currently a fourth year PhD student in the biomedical and biological sciences program. During my time here at Cornell, I've been fortunate enough to represent the student body in a variety of different ways. This has been through shared governance, whether that's through the GPSA or the University assembly. I was also fortunate enough to represent grad and professional students on the Cornell re-opening committees.

And it was through these experiences that I learned the importance of working collaboratively with student groups across campus and amplifying their voices and concerns. So I hope to continue to do so in this position in creating opportunities for more conversations between both Cornell community as well as the board. And hopefully, the goal is that I can work with you in creating a more inclusive, equitable, and healthier campus for all of us. So looking forward to the chat tonight.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much, Jeff. Now let's hear from Vince.

VINCE HARTMAN: Hi everyone. My name is Vince Hartman. I use he/him pronouns. I am a current graduate student in information systems at Cornell Tech. That's in New York City, if you guys are not aware. I went to undergraduate at Cornell. And since then, I was working as a health care IT consultant for eight years prior to grad school. I was involved in undergrad with the assemblies, and I was also involved in class councils. I currently live in Manhattan. And I was here actually in New York City during the height of the pandemic.

So the other day, the dean of Cornell Tech asked me why I would be running for trustee with generally Ithaca responsibilities, committing to a job that would be quite a bit of travel. And my primary reason and why I'm running is I was deeply bothered when the board of trustees announced this past spring that they were raising tuition. When everything has changed so dramatically with our COVID pandemic, the Cornell experience has been fundamentally altered.

That decision deeply bothered me so much that I found it necessary to run. Of all times, tuition should not be increased at Cornell during a public health crisis, is one of them. And when the majority of our classes are virtual, we should not have seen a tuition increase. I'm running because I know I am the best candidate that can tell the board why a tuition increase for this upcoming school year is unwise for the image that Cornell wants to promote.

I have a number of other issues that I'm running on, a lot them COVID related. Also it involves inclusion, sustainability, improving diversity on campus. I invite you during this discussion to go to my website, www.vincehartman.com, and to look over my platform and to consider a vote for me.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you, Vince. And lastly, Afua.

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Hi, everyone. My name is Afua Asantewaa, and I use she/her pronouns, and I'm an MBA candidate at the Johnson School of management. I moved to Ithaca this summer from Chicago. And prior to Johnson, I spent three years with IBM as a human capital consultant, but also as a driver of internal hiring-- for our internal hiring strategy when it came to underrepresented minorities.

Thank you for the opportunity for me and my fellow candidates to speak with you today. I know this is a tense, uncomfortable time with COVID 19 and the current election. If you're able to, please make sure to cast your vote for the current national election that is going on at the

moment. Your voice and your vote are a part of your power and your privilege. And please use them, keeping those who lack the opportunity in mind.

I decided to run for student rep for the board of trustees because I felt like it would be the perfect way to have an impact on our community. In choosing business schools, Cornell stood out as one of the most genuine, welcoming places to spend two years growing personally and professionally. As a member of the board, I promise to use my power and privilege to represent the student body to the best of my abilities.

My ultimate goal is to foster an inclusive and supportive environment for all, and ensure the University continues to be well regarded in the higher education sphere. I understand that members our community have been treated unfairly based on the color of their skin, and I plan to meet with members of Do Better Cornell to bring their demands, including issues pertaining to sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and accessibility for all our community members to the board for full consideration.

I will support the University in their efforts to keep us safe while introducing new strategies to provide access to various facilities for students use. And I will work with the Office of the President to address components that make up the college and various graduate programs rankings in order to improve our position.

I would like to acknowledge that in my current position, I'm not privy to all the information made available to Board members, but I will always act in the best interest of the student body. I also plan to make myself accessible to hear any concerns from members of our community. Thank you for your time and yeah, please support me.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you very much for these introductions. And I look forward to getting to know you over the next hour. So let's move on to my first question, which is, what do you believe are the top three issues that you would prioritize in terms for students today? Let's begin this question with Vince.

VINCE HARTMAN: So hi, everyone, again, my name is Vince. And I view the top three issues facing graduate students, number one, staying connected with the community. And this has always been a big issue. But it's been much more so a big issue with COVID. And primarily, we need to have better mental health resources to combat Zoom fatigue, to help this isolation and this issues we have in our community.

Secondly, within that topic, we need communication resources across the University for graduate students to create that community. One of the strong beneficial things we have at Cornell Tech is we have Slack that's been used to communicate with all of our classes, all of our professors and TAs. And I believe the Johnson School also has that. But I think it would benefit graduate students, undergraduate students a lot if they had a Slack or some sort of team-based thing to communicate among their peers and also with their professors.

Secondly, financial difficulties and strains of living on a graduate stipend. As I said in my opening statement, one of my main pushes is that tuition freeze. And I strongly believe that as Cornell students, we should not have to pay more for an education right now, especially in these economic hard times. And we should additionally be providing graduate students specific resources for Zoom, such as giving them the resources for the technology.

And then lastly, a big issue is job placement after graduation. And then especially since 50% of our population with graduate students are international. And just the additional visa restrictions and work authorization restrictions that have been coming in place. I was very satisfied when the GPSA this past Monday passed, I believe it was resolution two, on the University making a statement to take legal action if necessary, if the federal government moves on visa restrictions. And I wholeheartedly support that. And I would push forward other strong issues to support the international community in a time like this. So those are the top three issues I view right now.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much. Next, let's hear from Jeff.

JEFF PEA: Yeah, so in-- I've thought about these questions a lot, and I've had a lot of conversations with my fellow students. And I think, while there's so many-- there are three major fields of issues that really impact graduate professional students at this moment. One of them is well-being in the midst of a pandemic, another one is mental health, which Vince talked about. And the third one is inclusion on campus.

I think that in general, students are worried about how the ongoing pandemic will affect their life and their degree progression. So it's regardless of whether they're taking classes, they're teaching classes, or they're conducting research. And because of the fact that well-being is impacted by all aspects of life, graduate professional students, I'm sure, are concerned about not getting the adequate support regarding things like work-life balance, funding and financial situation, degree completion, housing, and access to medical and mental health services.

And even regarding mental health, many graduate professional students are unique on campus because they have many hats on campus. They are students, they are workers, teachers, researchers, parents, and caregivers, and so much more. And all these roles have unique challenges that are only exacerbated by the pandemic. And I think what's nice is that the University recently acknowledged this in the mental health report. And I think it's really important to build upon those recommendations and keep expanding in order to meet the graduate professional student needs.

I think the one last thing I want to bring up is that many students feel that it is really necessary for the University to continue the momentum towards diversity inclusion on campus, stemming from the National conversation we've had for a long time now on racial justice. And so this includes ideas behind more standardized approaches to address bias, not only in the classroom, but also the workplace and the community. Again, a real need for centralizing resources for anti-bias and anti-racism information and programming. And also providing a more additional

platforms for marginalized students on campus to have their voices heard and amplified. So I think those are three big things that I feel are really essential for the campus going forward.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you very much, Jeff. Next, let's hear from Afua.

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Sure. So I think the top three issues for graduate students today at Cornell are the costs and quality of our education, our mental and physical health, and just the state of the experience for international students. I hear Vince talking about the hike in tuition-- or raising tuition in the middle of a pandemic. And I think that a lot of students see tuition in terms of how they value it in ROI, and so their return on investment. And so they really want to know that the diversity of experiences and the support they feel reflects that.

And so I would want to look into why it is that tuition is at the level that it is at the moment. And sort of offer suggestions to the board as to how they can avoid raising it, but continue to support our students in a better way. And I agree, too, that this involves the connectivity of graduate students and undergraduate students across campus. This then ties into our mental and physical health. The pandemic has definitely taken a toll on a lot of us. But I agree, too, that inclusion is a matter that takes a toll on many of us in the community as well.

And so therefore, I think Cornell needs to take a stronger stance on inclusion, and ensure that their students, particularly black students feel supported. I have read many of the posts for blacks at Cornell, and I understand that many students have experienced different levels of discrimination, which in turn feeds into imposter syndrome and other issues that can relate to mental health. And so I'd like for those to be addressed directly.

And then for international students, they make up about 46% of the graduate student population. And so therefore, if their visas were to be threatened, this would be a major loss for the Cornell community. So I do agree that based on the vote that occurred on Monday, that Cornell took a step in the right direction, or the GPSA is taking a step in the right direction, and that this really needs to be brought forth to the board that Cornell, as a strong institution in our society continues to speak up about these issues in order to support international students. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you, Afua. Next let's hear from Liz.

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Yeah. So I believe that the top three issues for graduate students today, similarly to what everyone else said are equity, accessibility, and accountability. Equity, because there is an extreme lack of diversity on our campus. Not just in students but in faculty and staff and students across the board, undergrad, graduate, professional. And this is inhibiting us from truly having that positive and safe campus culture that is truly inclusive. I understand that the only real way to have a safe space for everyone would be for them to be able to see representation in themselves and faculty and in grad students. And that will only happen if Cornell actively dedicates resources to recruiting top talent and top faculty in these fields.

We need this anti-racism Institute to get the resources it really needs, monetarily, so that others can see our dedication to addressing these issues and want to be a part of our community as well. We know that top faculty of color attract top graduate students of color, and the surplus benefit, in turn, would make our campus more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and a safer place for everybody.

Accessibility, because we're all here to learn and grow and thrive. And I believe the University needs to make sure that we not only have the ability to do that, but are empowered to do so, and the means of doing so are accessible. This means accessibility must be a top priority in everything we do. We need to have adequate access to mental health resources across the board. And this would look like investing in Cornell Health and expanding the CAPS program. NAISAC just released a list of demands recently, and on there they were asking for a therapist who is native. I know a lot of black students on campus want to see more representation of therapists of color and CAPS as well, just so we can have our identities represented and be able to make that connection in that community.

We also need to invest more in Student Disability services. I know that department is very underfunded. And it puts an additional burden on students with disabilities to have to continuously advocate for themselves over and over. And we need to address the lack of parking and the ridiculous prices of parking spaces and a means of transportation. I want to ensure that all students have access to the things they need to succeed, and the access isn't difficult to get. Especially in everything we do.

And finally, I think accountability is one of the most important things as well. We need to ensure that the board continues to publicly fight this administration or any political administration that attempts to limit international students from attending our institution or any institution in the United States. And I would hold the board accountable to maintain their open and public stance in support of students getting visas and supporting students rights to be here.

I also want to hold the University accountable-- or the administration accountable for things that they've said they're going to do already, like divesting from fossil fuels, and have a timeline and a plan for how they're going to continue to make sure that we are not spending our money on those things. And then also, holding them accountable for the recommendations that were just released in the mental health review, and having a plan to see how that's going to happen.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you all for your answer to that question. And then just a reminder to keep all answers within about 2 and 1/2 minutes. If I put my finger up, it just means try to wrap up whatever thought you have. Okay, let's move on to our next question, which is, how would you describe your personal style of leadership, and how would you manage disagreement if you have to work, say, as part of a team with multiple different stakeholders? So again, I'm going to ask you all to respond in a different order than I just did for this previous question. So I'd like to actually begin with Liza this time, if you could go ahead.

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Okay, here I am. Hey. So I would say that I'm a leader who listens. I believe in collaboration and I also believe that vulnerability is a strength and not a weakness. We're all human. And I just want people to be who they are and not who the world wants them to be or who they think the world wants them to be. My leadership style is personable, and it's genuine. I build relationships. When I was the president of the gender justice advocacy coalition in undergrad, we began every meeting with a rose bud thorn activity, and I just wanted to check in to see how my team members were doing and how we were doing as an org.

I genuinely care about the people that I work with and the communities that I serve, and I really want to lead by bringing the voice of the people to the board of trustees. I want to humanize the issues that impact the students on this campus and uplift those voices to the people at the top. And I can do that only if I'm actively listening to the things they're telling me.

This past week I've spent a lot of time meeting with various student organizations on campus just trying to gather what their orgs want to see and how their communities are being impacted by the current policies at the University. And I've gathered so much insight on how diverse and across the board people's issues are with what's going on campus.

To answer the second part of the question, I manage disagreements by having open and honest conversations in settings that are not only productive, but healthy for everyone. I think that disagreements are a natural byproduct to finding solutions. So I actually find value in them, because they allow for you to hear every side of the story and hear multiple opinions. So to deal with disagreements, I think the best way is to have a productive conversation where everybody gets to air out their issues. And I have experience doing this because I've been trained in both facilitation and in active listening. So it's one of my passions. I was a communication major during undergrad, and I love to talk and I love to listen and hear people out. So that's my answer.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much. Next, let's hear from Jeff.

JEFF PEA: Yeah, no. I would actually echo a lot of that, of what Liz said. I think I see a lot of similarities there. I oftentimes find myself as a facilitator leader. Often times, where I want to bring in as many relevant voices and getting their perspectives. I think there will be certain times where I could provide, potentially, an experienced opinion, but I think oftentimes, more than not, I won't be able to. And it's because of that, I want to have a collaborative leadership style, where I can gain as much information and context as possible in order to make more accurate decisions.

And I think that in general, regarding how I manage disagreement, I think it's really important to recognize what are the expectations going into those conversations. Having everybody understand that this is a time for reflection of their own personal perspectives. And then finding opportunities to listen and learn from others that they're talking to. I found this highly useful in my leadership positions on campus, but also beyond that as a mentor for undergraduate research students, but also as an instructor on campus. I think that these,

oftentimes, are really good ways for students to not necessarily find agreement, but to find consensus, and an understanding of what others are going through. So I think that's how I would represent those values when I'm coming into the board of trustees and providing that as well.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you, Jeff. Next, let's hear from Vince.

VINCE HARTMAN: Hi everyone. So for my personal style of leadership, I am going to echo a lot of what's been said. And what I've honed through my career my personal life is consensus building and collaboration. I focus on ensuring that everyone is motivated to participate and everyone is empowered and feels supported. And then for disagreements, when tough decisions are needed, or if a strong differing opinion exists, I consult with those team members, I consult with those individuals. And generally on an individual basis before the group meets. And we ensure that their voice is heard and we can come to a consensus.

Personally, I found that a lot of drama and a lot of disagreements occur because individuals get called out in front of a group setting, specifically. And it just manages the situation very poorly. So that when these decisions eventually do get brought in front of the group, it acts more of a formality, and everyone's aware of each other's points of view. I personally enjoy meeting and understanding everyone within my peer group and outside my peer group. Meeting with grad, undergrad colleagues. And I just enjoy listening to everyone.

I'm just, in general, very good at supporting and building up team members. I was a product manager within health care for six years before grad school. And so I'm very result driven. And I'd ensure my team succeeds. And in general, I'm okay when things get done. I change the world, and nobody knows it was me who did it. I really just want to see change happen. And if it gets done, and it's not my name on it, I'm okay with that.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you, Vince. Next, Aufa.

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Great. Yeah, I would describe my leadership style as agile. I definitely like to assess the situation that I'm in prior to deciding the role I'm going to play. So in an environment where I'm truly leading a team, it can be about coaching, setting goals, engaging team members, managing progress towards the goal. But I also really believe in pace setting. So do as I do, or leading by example.

I really like to be Democratic, sort of surveying everyone involved, especially when it comes to my peers, and I see those who are part of the student body within Cornell as my peers. So I definitely want to take feedback from them, hear what their pain points are, really try to create actionable demands for the board or for the relevant parties that are in charge or can make decisions on various topics.

But also, too, I think in an environment where I trust people or I've been working with them for a long time, I can be a bit laissez faire or affiliative, where I can almost anticipate the responses

or decisions of my team members and I think some of that will come out the more and more I speak with different members of the Cornell community. And so I think that Cornellians are extremely intelligent, capable people. And I believe if a tone is set and they trust the person in the driver's seat, that we can seamlessly aim to achieve our goals as one unified community. And that's essentially how I will see my role as student rep for the board of trustees, as being a strong leader who respects the constituents and approaches every environment appropriately to get things done. So, yeah. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much. So I'm going to move on to my next question now. And just so everyone knows out there in the audience that after this next question, I'll start to consider questions from the audience. So please start thinking about your question now and putting it into the Q&A. I will give preference to questions that everyone can speak to. So please try to avoid questions that, for now, at least, questions that are directed at any particular individual, because I want to try to give everyone at least a fair amount of time to speak. So please start thinking about those questions now.

So my next question is, what previous experiences do you believe have best prepared you to operate at this high level of governance? So you've spoken a little bit about your background so far. Tell us, give us a little bit more detail about some of the specific experiences you've had that you think have best prepared you. For this question, I'd like to begin with Vince.

VINCE HARTMAN: Yes, so as I was previously mentioning, I worked in healthcare for eight years before I came to grad school. And what I specifically was doing was a manager in the hospital. And I worked extensively with C-level members within the hospital, assisting them with improving their workflows. I also worked a lot of times with physicians, listening to them and building a dialogue.

And so with these corporate and executive member teams, I have a lot of experience with guiding them towards result driven end goals. And then also, understanding how to communicate with them. And additionally, in my undergrad side, I worked with the Cornell administration also extensively and worked to make effective change for a student. And just in general, while the role of the student elected trustee-- this is kind of just my position, there's a bit of hard power where you have the sense you have a vote on the board.

But the trustee position is much more so a notion of soft power. It's just the influence you can create, the ability for you to win over the administration, in a sense of negotiation style. Convincing them that there is a sense of cooperation for both parties to win, both from the student side, the administration, the faculty. So within my work experience, I've had a lot of that sort of bringing people to a sense of common negotiation wins where everyone ends up ahead. So that would be from my personal experience.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, great. Let's hear next from Liz.

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Yeah, thank you. So I have had the honor and privilege of serving the Cornell community for the past four years. As the president of the gender justice advocacy coalition, I advocated for an increased byline budget to have more money to uplift and serve various communities and organizations on campus. Because of this, I was able to foster relationships, build coalitions, and collaborate with a wide array of individuals.

And as the president of a major byline funded student organization, I've had firsthand experience advocating for the needs of my community to administrators. So before I was fighting for issues, but with this student trustee position, I would be with administrators helping to advocate for other students. I know how hard it was, and I know how frustrating it was to advocate for your needs on this campus, individually and as a student leader. And I want to bridge that gap, honestly.

So in this position, I also worked for two years to reboot the initiative to have free menstrual products on campus in all bathrooms, so that those products were accessible to everyone who menstruates. I mean, especially in this COVID 19 pandemic with the economy looking the way it does, access to these free products is even more important, particularly for low income students, and faculty and staff as well.

So in working on this initiative, I had to collaborate with administrators in departments across the University in order to implement this project, and I navigated the Cornell bureaucracy to get this done well. And as the VP of outreach for ConsentEd, finally, and for those of you who aren't familiar with the organization, it's a peer to peer education program that engages students in essential conversations about sex, alcohol, consent, and social responsibility, as well as being a Cornell social consultant and the sporting center for Health Initiatives.

I've facilitated many difficult conversations with a wide variety of people, a diverse group of individuals. And this is a skill that I can bring to the board to advocate for complex issues. Being a ConsentEd facilitator, you have to meet people where you are, where they are. Giving a presentation to one organization looks very different from giving one to another organization. And in that position, you have to put the community's needs before the organization's needs, being ConsentEd's needs. And so I'm really good at facilitating communication and just starting those tough conversations and weighing them out and just talking to people and meeting them where they are, which I think is essential to this board of trustee position.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, great. Let's hear next from-- sorry, my list here. Let's hear from Afua next.

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Great. So I think the closest experience that I've had to serving in a role like this was sitting on the Center of Excellence for the Black Employees for IBM. Far before the events of this past summer, black IBMers had identified a problem when it came to the talent pipeline and retention of black employees. As an organization with over 380,000 people operating in 175 countries. Mind you, the world has 195 recognized by the UN. IBM was around 2% black.

We confronted the leadership with these facts and laid out actual steps to achieve our demands. I spoke with partners, directors, my peers and consulting, people in the sales department, and various IBM alumni to collect data. And what we found was that many people outside of the black community had no clue what their black colleagues experienced in and outside of work.

This led to many black employees leaving for other organizations. And IBM essentially didn't have a sustained target strategy for their black employees. So we launched a campaign where black employees share their experiences. We planned a summit for the black employees across the Americas to come together to learn new skills and chart their career paths at IBM. And this was a pilot to be rolled out in other geographies.

I would say Cornell runs more or less like a large organization with a student population of over 24,000 students. People have various needs and concerns. And this wasn't just about black employees. This was just about convincing a group of people who weren't seeing something. And a group of people, who I think were also a bit removed. And I think that sort of sometimes the issue-- or not necessarily the issue, but one of the gaps in leadership, or possibly the board of trustees, is they're not necessarily in the shoes of the students.

And so I really want to make sure to bring that forth and use the skills I've had or developed as a consultant or as a project manager for to say, hey, this is exactly the data I've pulled to say that this is an issue. And also, this is exactly how we can address this. I just need you to either give me the green light or tell me what exactly you need to get a better understanding of this. And so I would say that that's probably the closest experience I've had to this role that I am running for currently. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: OK, thank you. Now, let's hear from Jeff.

JEFF PEA: Yeah. So in my time here, I had briefly mentioned this at the very beginning. I have been really fortunate to be in positions where I could be working with a lot of groups on campus regarding issues not only pertinent to graduate professional students, but also everyone else in the Cornell community. I spent three years on the GPSA, as well as on the University assembly. And there I really was able to talk and discuss with a variety of students and other individuals on campus. And that includes staff and faculty as well on issues that are really important to students.

I was involved intimately last year with the universal push for the entire college to go and divest from fossil fuels. Previously before, I've also voiced calls for increased on-campus child care services. And I think even more related to what's going on now, I also had the fortunate opportunity to sit on one of the Cornell reopening committees this past summer. Thinking about the strategy of how to reopen this campus and what voices are necessary in there.

We knew that there was a real lack of voice from graduate professional students, especially relating to how the campus was reopening. And so this was an effort that was done collaborative with me, the other graduate professional student representatives, and also many in the community on how we should move forward with that. That this included town halls, not only with the entire population, but even with minority students that related to how a campus reopen will affect them.

In addition to that, kind of filling in the vacuum that was missing from the administration. For those of you who are in the audience who may remember this, this past summer, we sent out a massive reopening survey to gauge interest of Cornell graduate professional students. And we heard back from 2,200 of you on what are the considerations that need to be in place and what are the action items the administration needs to provide in order to safely reopen and facilitate a campus for everyone.

And I think that these experiences were incredible because not only was I able to hear the opinions and perspectives of so many, but it also made me able to communicate with senior administration on the campus, as well as those around us that really do support the student and the well-being of everyone on campus. So I think as a whole, those are a couple of experiences I think are really relevant, and kind of combining together and pushing forward as a student elected trustee.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you all for your answers. And we'll now move on to one of the questions from our audience. Natalia Hernandez writes, a large issue that many BIPOC students on campus are concerned about is the presence of CUPD and whether they are actually here to protect us. There have been calls for disarming, defunding, and disbanding CUPD and integrating alternative community led solutions to creating a safe environment for Cornell students. How would you go about mitigating these concerns, and what is your stance on CUPD presence and their future on this campus? OK, so let's begin this question with Afua. Would you like to start or stop on that?

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Yeah, yeah. I can go ahead.

DAVID DUNHAM: Sure.

AFUA ASANTEWAA: So, I think the response to this question is a two pronged approach. Just because a lot of times when you want to put something forward to the administration, in terms of dealing with a police force, it can be a little slow in comparison to the immediacy or the immediate need to tackle this for students of color on campus. As a person from Chicago, from the South side of Chicago, this is very near and dear to me.

And I would hate for something-- I would hate for a run in with the CUPD to turn into something we couldn't return from, essentially, in terms of the feelings that students would have on campus. And so I think for one, we need to follow the processes that have been put in place, therefore documenting any run ins with CUPD. Just because-- and Ithaca police. Since I've

been here on campus, I have been in a group of students that has had the police called on us by a neighbor.

And so it's a terrifying experience, just because you never know what can happen next. So I think we need to be reporting all of those instances. Because as student rep, what I can point to or put in front of the board of trustees is, look at how many instances or incidents have happened within this frame of time. And I think that will speak to them or mean something to them. Because then also too, I can compare that to other environments and show them that it really is only a matter of time before something more serious happens.

In addition to that, I think all the students need to continue to support one another and need to have open conversations with one another about these different issues. Think about ways to protect and look out for one another. Just because I think we who have experienced it firsthand can be a calming factor to one another. But essentially, what I think is that documentation and support for one another is how we're going to tackle this. And it's definitely one of the issues that I plan to bring towards to the board. Because I wouldn't want any students feeling like their lives were threatened or their freedom were threatened here on campus. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you. Next, let's hear from Liz.

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Hey, thank you, Natalia, for asking this question. As a queer black woman in the United States, this is an issue that is very near and dear to my heart. I don't think anybody can deny that there is an issue with police brutality happening in our country. And similarly to a lot of other issues that we have in our country. Those issues are very much replicated on our campus and in University settings.

I agree that we need to definitely be proactive in our approach instead of reactive, because we do not want to see anything happening on our campus like what happened to the Yale graduate student who was harassed by their campus police. I do understand, though, that some type of crisis response management team is 100% necessary because we're on campus and things can happen when there are a lot of people here from a lot of different backgrounds.

But I do think that, to answer this question, involves a very robust, round table conversation with a lot of different people from a lot of different communities who have a lot of different perspectives. And that's something that I want to bring to the board of trustees. I have connections with a lot of different student organizations on campus and like I said earlier, I've been going around asking people what their needs are, and this is something that's been coming up.

And I want to be able to bridge the gap between students who are experiencing things on the ground and the board of trustees. And I think this is an important topic where a lot of voices need to be heard, because there are a lot of different instances and communities that this can impact in different ways.

Ultimately, I want everybody on this campus to be safe. I want everybody to be able to thrive and prosper and do the things that they need to do to get that degree, and eventually get that check and collect their coin. So yeah, I just want to make sure that everyone's safe. And I think that starts with a conversation about what the best way to do this is. Because I don't think that any one person has the perfect answer. I think this is a lot of brainstorming, a lot of collaboration and a lot of coalition building that is necessary to combat this issue.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you. Next, let's hear from Jeff.

JEFF PEA: Yeah, I think the conversation regarding police on campus is very difficult. And I think that it's important for me to recognize that I will never have the experiences that Afua and Liz have. But I think it's important to recognize the importance of having a safe campus and a place that students feel comfortable. Cornell is uniquely, geography wise, in terms of how it orients the space, and whether or not police should be on campus is a really important issue.

I think the University has made some steps towards this. I do think that, looking at the data and looking at how reports are coming in and keeping the Cornell police accountable in terms of all interactions with students and other members in the community is essential. I also think that steps towards oversight is really important. The consideration and communication with relevant groups on campus, especially those in these communities, is also really essential.

I think Liz brought up a really good point, which is that in terms of instances that happen on campus, whether or not police should be arriving first to them may be something for reconsideration. One example I can think of is the blue light service. I don't think many students feel comfortable contacting the police for escorts around campus. And maybe this should be something that's student driven, or something that's peer based.

And I think that in addition, there are other alternatives for conflict resolution where it might be older alternatives for reaching out when crises do happen on campus. And I that's something, as University, we should take a really deep look at.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you, and next is Vince.

VINCE HARTMAN: Yeah, I think it's important to stress, as Jeff said, that I won't personally face the same issues that Liza and Afua and other members of our community face. And these conversations are especially important for us to address, especially in light of the horrendous national tragedies of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others. Nobody can deny also that racism isn't even present on our own campus.

As late as 2017, we had an incident in a fraternity where a black individual was assaulted and beat, and the other one used the n-word against him. And it's completely disgraceful for a University that this would even occur. It's something that shouldn't be tolerated. And a University like ours shouldn't have incidents like this.

So it's a failure of our University and of our initiatives, and we need to address these. And we can't lose that vigilance or that's why it's an especially important issue. With specifics to the Cornell police, I believe that we should better train them. And as Jeff was saying, that we could put some of their resources to other units that they don't personally need to handle that don't require force and that can be student led.

One instance that I know of is that when I was on campus, there was an EMT group that was run by undergrads. And they would be the ones to respond. And it was completely undergrad driven. So I think if incidences don't require force or police, we can have undergrads, such as the blue light, handle them. And we can have a discussion, and we need to definitely fix it.

As for the extreme and discussions of completely disbanding them, I understand that discussion. But what really would concern me is, I wouldn't know if that means the Ithaca police would then take jurisdiction over our campus. And I would like to think that if we have Cornell with the security and this balance we have with Ithaca and our own security force, that we have more control and we can have this discussion and fix it internally. I feel it would be much more difficult to then have the Ithaca police handling our campus jurisdiction and affairs.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much. Just a quick note to my extent as president of the GPSA that one of the ways in which you can contribute on this issue, if you're interested, if you're a graduate student, is by getting involved. Talking with us about what's going on with the public safety advisory committee, which is the major oversight of the potential reforms that could be happening to this CUPD. We're looking for a new graduate representative. So if you're passionate about this issue, you're a graduate student and want to represent graduate students, please get in contact with me later about that.

But for now, let's move on to our next question in the chat. Uche Chukwukere writes, recently, we saw the ushering in of a free menstrual product initiative on campus that was started by a grassroots organization on campus. However, this is a pilot program that does not have guaranteed funding for the future. How do you plan to work to incorporate free menstrual products into the yearly budget, and more so uplift the voices of gender marginalized students on campus and usher in gender equality? So, for this question Jeff, would you like to go first on this one?

JEFF PEA: Sure, yeah. I think that this topic is incredibly important. And I think it's shocking to some extent that these kind of products aren't readily available beforehand. I fully support the availability of free menstrual products on campus. I think it does need to be integrated more formally and consistently into the university's financial allocations. And this could be at the University administration level, or even at the board level.

I also think that in order to kind of support that environment and to continue that conversation, there should be more support, financially, but also logistically for some of these resource centers. We're talking and things like the Women's Resource Center and the LGBTQ+ Resource

Center. These are spaces that are available for students and also members of the community that really want to have that safe space for them and also find resources.

And these are also opportunities for workshops for the rest of the campus. I think that these are important outlets, in terms of how can those who maybe don't personally identify, but want to help support those of their friends or peers that are, in terms of creating a more inclusive and equitable space for everyone. And so I think there's a couple ways to do this, and I think those are kind of the first few steps, for sure.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you. Let's hear from Afua next.

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Sure, yeah. I think this question of gender equity and the funding around menstrual products is extremely important. And I think it speaks to a larger theme. I feel like, in terms of looking at the budget, just like we fund other products that are used in the restroom, toilet paper, et cetera, I think this should be incorporated with that budget and these products should be readily available.

In terms of speaking to gender equity and gender marginalized communities, I think just like the president made the anti-racist, how to be anti-racist book available to the entire student body, I think that was a great first step. But I would like to see, kind of to Jeff's point, more workshops and requirements around learning more about gender diversity. And I think, now, we've all more or less started to use our pronouns or add them to our Zoom rooms. I think all of these maybe seemingly small steps are going to be extremely important in advancing the perspective on gender equality throughout campus.

I also feel like any violations of gender equality need to be addressed swiftly by the University. Just because when people are able to marginalize these groups, it creates-- I don't want to continue to use the word theme, but it creates a sense of normalcy around this. And I think that is the larger overarching issue. And once that is addressed, being able to fund things like menstrual products, having workshops, et cetera, should become commonplace. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you. Vince, could you go next?

VINCE HARTMAN: Yeah. I just want to say, this is a great question. And I'm personally impressed with the students who put together this initiative. When I was an undergrad there was not such an initiative on campus. And hearing this question, I think it's actually kind of shocking it took that this long. Because when I was undergrad, there were condoms on campus provided by Cornell Health and that were readily available. And added such a product such as a menstrual initiative. But it's taken so long is, like I said, shocking.

So some ways that we could see this funded is we could partner with the assemblies that are interested, work with the administration to create it. Or I can't imagine it's also that challenging and difficult for a campus to offer these products, as Afua was saying, in our bathrooms, and is

it that costly of an initiative? And so I could see this in the same category as supplying our bathrooms with the toilet paper.

So maybe also the diversity and cultural department could address this and find it within their budget. But definitely, I feel it's a great initiative and something that I would look forward to working as trustee to find funding for.

DAVID DUNHAM: And of course, Liz.

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Yeah. So I love this question. This is a project that's near and dear to my heart, and I spent the past two years working with various students to get this work done. I think first to be very clear about why this project isn't funded, and I think it speaks to what the priorities of the University are at this moment. People who menstruate spend about \$18,000 a year on these products in their lifetime. And like was already said, these products are just as necessary as toilet paper and paper towels to 50%-- more than 50% of the population.

So I think, first, we have to start with an educational piece. Just because I think some people still have the perception that all people who menstruate are women, and that's just not the case. So since we put these products in all men's, women, and gender neutral bathrooms with adequate counter space, that's the asterisk at the bottom, we have to ensure that people knew why they were going in men's restrooms.

And with the project that's currently on the ground right now, we've had some issues with individuals throwing away the products in men's restrooms and being upset that they were there. And I think that speaks to this greater issue of people just not understanding how different gender identities and marginalized gender communities are impacted by this instance.

I think we also need to integrate this education into the curriculum, like already said by other candidates, it's not something that needs to be just an anti-racist book that we get on our campus. It's something that is genuinely impacting people every single day. So we need to be knowledgeable about this, just like we're knowledgeable about everything else that impacts people every single day.

And I think that starts also with conversations. And just trying to educate each other and build each other up. And understanding that we all come from different-- we all have different information and knowledge bases about these issues. But the fact that it's 2020 and that we need to learn and grow and move past this binary of a society that we live in is also important. So I think the University needs to take onus on that. And also, just for the record, this project is currently being funded by the Student Infrastructure Committee of the Student Assembly.

So it's being funded by the student activities fee that we pay every year. And I'm of the belief that the University needs to put this into the facility's budget. And I've already had the conversations with VP Rick Burgess. And I already have a working relationship with Cindy Lockwood and Chris Mott in University Facilities Building Management department to get this

done. So the groundwork foundations already been laid, we just have to put pressure on the University to see that this is important enough for them to fund it and put it into the working academic budget every year.

DAVID DUNHAM: OK thank you all for answering that question. Let's move on to the next question now, which comes from Ansumana Bangura, who writes, hello panelists. There have been mentions of advocating for a tuition freeze, however the University is in a position where they have lost millions of dollars due to the effects of COVID 19 pandemic. Although this initiative would be beneficial for students, how do you intend to realistically usher in a tuition freeze given the financial hardships the University is facing, given the fiduciary duty as a trustee, and ensuring the longevity of Cornell? So this question is clearly oriented toward Vince's platform, but I'd like to hear from all the candidates your stances on this issue. So let's hear from Vince first on this.

VINCE HARTMAN: Yeah, so I just want to go to the heart of the tuition freeze and just comment on [INAUDIBLE] of that. Specifically for Cornell, it was announced this past month that our endowment has actually gone up since March. And so when they actually stated that they were going to not do a tuition freeze and increase our tuition by 3% to 4%, it was at the heart of the economic crisis when the stock market was collapsing, and it was fearful that it might affect Cornell's endowment.

But that's actually not the case. Cornell's endowment has indeed gone up. It's still strong at \$8 billion. And when I say a tuition freeze, I'm mentioning not that we're getting rid of undergraduate tuition and graduate tuition, just that the sticker price of \$55,000 will still be that next year. It's just that \$55,000 isn't going to increase another 3% and go to \$60,000. Can't do my 3% off the top of my head. I'm sure that's not that number.

But I look at it as a University, yes, they've had to pay more for COVID tests. They've had to pay more for some of the effects of COVID and paying for it. But in terms of what students are going through and this pandemic in particular, this is the time when Cornell should step up, where it shouldn't ask students to pay more for tuition. And if we have an \$8 billion endowment, this is the time you look into using a little bit of that to help students, again, during an economic crisis and pandemic.

Because while the University might be financially hit hard, it is more so to families, the students, and everyone else in this country that has been hit harder. So I look at it as, yes, Cornell will have to-- it will be a little bit financially harder. But now is the time that Cornell should step up, and a message that we should send, as a University, and to all students that Cornell is interested in having our back in moments like this.

DAVID DUNHAM: Liz, would you like to go next on this question?

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Yeah. So I think it is unrealistic for us to think we can take money out of the endowment and put it into students pockets. I don't think that is how the endowment works. I

think we, the University has an onus to take care of students and meet the financial needs of students in the best way that they can. And I think we know that universities shouldn't draw from endowments because of what happened in 2008. Because in the long run, it actually negatively impacts how much money we have to spend. And it will ultimately cost us more money in the long run.

So I think there are other ways that we can support students who are in financial need and we should have conversations about.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you. Afua, next?

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Sure, yeah. As I mentioned before, I think that a lot of students look at tuition in terms of their return on investment. And so I agree with Liz, it's not necessarily-- may not be necessarily realistic to rely on pulling from the endowment. But I do think that right now, the University is directing a lot of funds towards COVID testing. But there are a lot of resources that are being underutilized right now due to students not necessarily being in classrooms on campus.

And so it's going to require, I think a revision of our current costs. So thinking about the energy that the University consumes every year, I think that's something that-- I mean, at least within this time could go down. Maybe that can positively impact the funds available to the University to redirect in other areas. Another thing, too, could be a strong ask to our alumni's who were at some point on campus enjoying all the freedoms of being able to walk around without a mask and meeting with their professors and things of that sort. If we put out a strong ask to alumni who are thriving and doing well, that may also be beneficial to pull in additional funds.

And also, too, I think that it's also just about considering where, as I mentioned costs, but where funds are really being deployed, and maybe even asking students what they'd be willing to cut back on. Just because if it's more important for there to be a tuition freeze or not have tuition go up again, there's going to be some compromise that's going to need to happen there. So I think that that's going to be really important.

But also, too, just thinking about ways to, again, increase the value of a degree from Cornell University. And that's focusing on different aspects like rankings, the professors we bring to the University, diversifying that. Even tackling the issue with CUPD. All of these things will make students be more comfortable and be-- at least a bit more understanding or considerate if tuition would need to increase. But I would definitely try to do anything in my power to ensure that it does not. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: And Jeff.

JEFF PEA: Yeah, so obviously this is a very tricky question, just given the context of what kind of world we're in now and how Cornell operates. Again, I only have the understanding of it from outside looking in on the trustees of how money is managed. And there's a lot of confidentiality

regarding where it's allocated. And an important thing to also think about, and I think everybody brought up good points, is that the flipside of the tuition costs is also related, is financial aid. And where this financially comes from primarily is either driven by endowments or alternatively, if endowments aren't returning as much as they can, oftentimes through tuition.

And so we have to consider opportunities where we can either-- if there is a tuition freeze of some sort, where opportunities to increase financially, especially for those from low income or first generation families. In addition to that, I think Vince also brought up a good point. If the University is seeing this normal trend of increasing their endowments in the midst of a pandemic, I think it's good for the trustees to take a closer look at what did work during this time. What happened between March and now that was successful, and really amplify that. And I think that that will help also in a long way with how students can see the benefits of that, whether it's through their time here on campus, or in terms of getting the support they need.

I think the final thing that I want to bring up is, I think Afua really points to this, is the value of the degree. I think for a lot of students, maybe this also includes finding ways and consolidating ways to find opportunities after they leave. When we talk about asking for endowments from alumni, we're talking about opportunities for students here, I think we really do need to push a stronger way to manage career services here on this campus.

I think in the current state it's rather decentralized, and I think that there could be a strong push for not only undergraduates, but also graduate and professional students to work together, collectively, in terms of really giving the most for students on their way out, and then also how they come back to the Cornell community. Whether that's through the endowments or any other way.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you. I'd like to move on to another question from the audience. This one comes from Janani Hariharan, who writes, many graduate students are actively working from home during the pandemic, which means that we are using our own, often limited financial and material resources to further the university's mission. What low hanging solutions would you offer the administrators to ease this burden?

So for this question, can I now start with Jeff? Would you like to start this one?

JEFF PEA: Yeah, for sure. I think this is really essential. And I think this is an issue that came up quite considerably during the transition in the summer towards reopening campus. From our professional and graduate student report in which we surveyed about 28%, 30% of all students on campus. About half of them were saying that they were able to complete their degree at home, and not necessarily need to be on campus.

But the important thing that they brought up collectively was issues regarding housing, issues regarding technology needs that Vince brought up, issues regarding infrastructure software, and as well as just general care. If they have families, child care services and that sort. And so I

think one thing that was really important that helped a lot of students on campus in the spring was the access fund. This was a collective effort that really did support students in need.

There were certain situations that did hinder students, such as situations with the \$500 cap on using the fund. In addition to that, this was something that really does need to be continued over time. So I think the access fund is something that students need to have access to throughout, not only this fall, but as we transition to the spring. Especially given the fact that we're not very clear as to what the trajectory of spring will look like. And I think that's one opportunity to really help.

I think another thing is that there are resources on campus that do support students. For example, technology loan services to the libraries, as well as other resources in certain departments that do provide certain softwares for graduate students and professional students. However, most students don't really know of it. And I think this is creating more accessible ways for students to be able to know what is out there for them, if they are working at home. And so I think there is definitely some really simple things that we can do to help everyone in terms of where they're working, right? In our homes, like I am, or students even going on campus occasionally.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, Afua, would you like to go next?

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Sure. Yeah, I'd like to echo, especially Jeff's latter point, and that is just about putting forth with the resources that are currently available to students. I learned the other day that with health insurance and with a proper assessment you can get a sun lamp to put on your desk if you experience seasonal depression. So something I learned from talking to other students. And so I think it's going to be important to streamline a place where graduate students or students throughout the University can find different resources to help them.

I also think that it's really important for the University to use its current resources to support students. As students mentioned there for the first time, probably working from home all the time, maybe sitting down in your chair at home is super uncomfortable if you're at your dining table or something of that sort. I think about all the chairs that are sitting in classrooms at the University, and the fact that some of those probably could be leased out. And maybe there could be some sort of a hold on your account or something like that. But just to try to find ways to utilize existing resources to continue to support students.

I know that Johnson has made it really, really easy to find administration and speak to them about our needs. And I think sometimes it does seem like it's very decentralized, probably across the University, and so maybe finding a forum or some sort of Dropbox where people can continue to drop suggestions would be extremely helpful. But, yeah, I think just streamlining information, passing on existing resources, and then continuing to communicate with the students and acknowledging them, and acknowledging any of their needs, whether it's extensions on assignments, or maybe a gap semester or something of that sort. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you. Vince, could you go next?

VINCE HARTMAN: Yeah. So this kind of highlights during my initial discussion, I was saying my top three points. The second one was about the financial difficulties and the strains of living on a graduate stipend. So the worlds and Cornell, we went full virtual. And Cornell kind of just expected grad students had the resources. We're doing TA on Zoom. And so I believe, some students have been able to get the resources from their departments. Others have used the COVID accessibility fund to try to get some of the resources.

But I just in general believe that there should be a fund for work from home resources for graduate students. When I worked in the workforce and I was expected to lead meetings to have an impact on my client, I was given a computer and I was given the resources to do so. So if graduate students are expected to lead these world class presentations for other undergraduate students, I really think it's necessary for graduate students to have these resources and.

I don't think it would be that difficult for Cornell to create a specific fund for graduate students to have it. And it would be separate from asking money from their department. So it would be universal across. So if you are an English PhD candidate, you would have the same resources as a physics PhD candidate. It's just across the board, you get the resources you need to TA your classes. Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, and Liz?

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Yes so I think first the University administration, faculty, professors, need to genuinely acknowledge and address how tough this whole situation is for students across the board. Financially, with mental health, with physical health, with literally every aspect of our lives has been flipped, turned upside down to quote, "Fresh Prince of Bel Air", in this pandemic. And I think similarly to what Jeff said, the access fund that undergraduate students created was a really good attempt to combat these issues.

I think if graduate student orgs in tandem with graduate student departments worked together to make something similar to the access fund for graduate students, that would be an incredible resource for students on the ground. I also think that, again, more transparency to the resources is very important. Because a lot of people don't know what they have offered to them.

I think there needs to be some type of template or laid indication of what you can do, what people can help you with what specific things. So that students don't have the additional burden, additional stress of trying to figure out what to do to get the resources they need and what to do to get the help that they need. I think that professors and people working with students on campus also need to be trained in ways to understand students' experiences.

I think that we sometimes have an issue where professors and people on staff have a lack of empathy and understanding for what students are going through in this time. And I think that is something that the University should be responsible before. Making sure that everybody is on the same page about how hard this is for everyone. Making sure they have access to the things that they need to make sure that they can succeed while they're here. Even in this wild, wild, pandemic time.

DAVID DUNHAM: Okay, thank you very much for that question. And let me just say, thank you all for being with us in this marathon open forum. We're cutting a little bit short on time. But I would like to get one more question in from myself if there isn't any from the audience at the moment, which is something we haven't really addressed, which is international students. So as you know, roughly half of all the graduate professional students are international. And in recent past four years, they've faced mounting difficulties.

So their studies are Cornell. They face travel prohibitions and maybe likely face new visa restrictions. How should Cornell better support its international students in this regard, and if at all, in the face of these difficulties? So would Aafa, would you like to start off on this question?

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Sure, I can go ahead. Yeah, so I think in this matter the first step to me is acknowledgment. One thing I can think of that has been ongoing recently is protests in Nigeria, ending SARS and police brutality. And I know at Johnson, our dean reached out to students to check on us, and I haven't seen anything come down from the larger University. And it speaks to an issue that's going on across the black diaspora. Just silence when that is going on, it's deafening.

And it really just feels like a part of our community is not being acknowledged. And I think, too, that that also teaches other students to not acknowledge what's going on. So I think acknowledgment is the first step. Beyond that, I think also again, Cornell understanding its power and its position in society and using that voice to speak to politicians or different large organizations that have major influence on some of these decisions.

Of course, companies like Google, even IBM, have had a lot to say because they have a lot of international employees. Cornell should take a similar stance. They have a lot of international students. And so I think that that's the next step. And then also figuring out how to protect the existing student population here on campus. Because yes, you want to ensure that international students can continue to come to the University. But you want to make sure the ones that are currently a part of the community feel safe and secure and feel that they have the resources they need.

And so whether that's about housing students, figuring out their individual visa situations, there should be a dedicated office that is robust that has a great understanding of each individual student's position, and reaches out to them to offer assistance. And students should also know where to find those resources, so that they can reach out to those folks. I have two parents who moved to the United States to attend school, I'm West African, and I'm Ghanaian and

Ivorian. And so this is something that's very close to my heart. And so yeah, that's kind of how I would handle that.

DAVID DUNHAM: OK, thank you. Liz, would you like to follow up on that?

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: That was such a beautiful and eloquent answer. I don't know if everybody else can see me, but I was snapping, clapping, jiving the whole time. I mean, you really just hit every single point, wow. That was-- that was so good. I'm like shook. I'm like kind of speechless right now, for how-- you just moved me. I know I'm not answering the question right now, I'm taking up time. But like yes, ma'am. Oh, Lord. I need to take a chill pill.

OK, echoing literally everything that was just said, I think, yeah, the international students that we have here are a very important piece of the Cornell community. Emphasis on the word community. And I think it's important to make sure and foster a very inclusive environment on our campus. And I think that, one, again starts with representation I think-- God, I can't even get over how good of an answer that was. Geez. OK, like I'm genuinely just like-- my heart's pounding because of how good that was.

But yeah, back to that. I think we need to connect with-- continue to uplift the international students that are here. I think that the University and the board of trustees needs to be held accountable to support the students that they've accepted and brought to Ithaca, and this means that the University must continue to openly support international students and things like their visas and standing against any administration that tries to negatively impact people's access to Cornell. So yeah, I really just cannot compete with the answer that Afua just gave. I feel like I need to Tweet it or something. That was so good. I'm going to look back at the recording to feel it again, thank you for that.

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Thank you.

DAVID DUNHAM: And thank you, yes. Vince, would you like to follow up?

VINCE HARTMAN: Yeah, so to answer the question, how should Cornell better support international students, I think it's been said. The most important thing is understanding how difficult it is to get into this country as an international student, to stay here, and then to find a job. Even if you're the best international Cornell student, you get straight A's, even when you get the employment notice, you still gotta go through a 30% lottery to even stay in this country. So it is incredibly hard to be an international student.

And then so many restrictions have been put in place against them, just in general. And so Cornell needs to, as I've said previously, stand in support of international students right now, especially against federal regulations. And take, when necessary, legal actions against the federal government.

And then additionally, another big issue that faces the international community is when you get here your first year, it is extremely lonely. You don't know the language, as well as your peers, and you don't have that friend group. And especially right now during COVID. So mental health is just a huge component for that community. So while the University has done a bit with mental health since I was a student, there's definitely room for more improvement in access and quality.

And a big issue right now for international students that weren't able to make it to Ithaca is that if you are on the Cornell Health insurance plan, you can't use mental health providers, counselors, because you're not in New York state. It's just a rule of health insurance. I think that Cornell should partner with our US senators and try to get that changed, and try to make a statement that we should be able to use our mental health providers for all of our students, even if they're not on campus in Ithaca, and support our international friends that weren't able to make it here because of federal restrictions. So that's what I would do.

DAVID DUNHAM: OK, and Jeff, please.

JEFF PEA: Now I think all of you echoed some really awesome points. And yeah, I need a soundbite of Afua's little speech and just post it everywhere. I resonate with this a little bit. I was an international student undergrad. And I can understand the sentiment of coming to a new place, on your own, and just not knowing where things are.

So I think there's a couple ways the University can go through this. I think a lot of people address the top part, which was how can the University advocate for its international students against these federal policies and helping facilitate the immigration component. I think an expansion and more logistical support for the Office of Global Learning is essential for all this.

Another thing I think about when I came into University was immersion. I think some of us chatted about this a little bit earlier, was feeling like you're welcome when you arrive to campus. And I think that there's a real lack of immersion programming for international students. Not only at the undergraduate level, but especially for professional and graduate students. They want to be able to identify with those who also come from other places around the world into this new country and start this new life.

And so that programming is essential, not only for them to meet peers who are starting the same experience, but also it's an opportunity for the University to provide them the resources they need, by providing them the access for navigating housing, navigating the different utilities in Ithaca, those sort of things. I remember when I first went to undergrad, the first things I went through with an immersion program was getting health insurance in the country, getting a phone number, even, and that sometimes can be really difficult and challenging. And so that's something to think about as well.

Another thing is also regarding, first for those international students, and Afua brought this up too, making them feel welcome on campus. I do think that there is-- when you have situations

like these, where you have the government not fully supporting its international students, there needs to be spaces for international students to have this dialogue and communication. I think that we could have opportunities through Cornell Health, specifically, or through CAPS, group counseling for international students specifically. Having counselors or individuals and professionals that are of these backgrounds to help guide them through that process and recognize the challenges that they're going through.

We saw this little bit in the summer. And Vince pointed this out a little bit to kind of extend of that. International students that weren't in the US cannot access Telehealth. They cannot access CAPS or anything else. And so we need to think of opportunities to broaden and provide these opportunities for those who are especially not here right now because of visa issues or the pandemic itself in general.

DAVID DUNHAM: OK, thank you so much. We're down to our last five minutes, so we have to move on to closing statements. But in making your closing statements, we did have one more question. I'm sorry we can't really get to it. So if you want to incorporate it into your closing statement, I think that would be great, because I think it's a great question which comes from Christine Ohenewah who says, how do we best elevate Cornell as a leading voice on national issues? So in the spirit of that question, I'd like to now move on to closing statements, because I think that in closing, I think we'll have a chance to speak to that a little bit.

So for closing statements, I'd like to begin with Jeff. So.

JEFF PEA: Yeah, so first of all, I really appreciate everybody coming in to the forum, and I also really appreciate being able to have a space to talk and also meet and hear more from the other candidates. All of you are amazing. I really admire your dedication and effort, and I'm really excited for whoever ends up taking this role.

I will say that in general, when you think about how we can best support our campus, it really does require us to talk to everybody and have them in the room. And I think that in general, in order to do so, we have to be listeners, we have to be facilitators, and we have to be those who can empathize. And I think that for this position, this is an essential role, because you played that bridge between the Cornell community and the board of trustees. And so think about that a little bit as you go through the next couple of days in the election process.

In terms of the question, I guess, that was brought up, I'm just taking a look at it a little bit. And I think in terms of national issues, Cornell is really kind of primed for some of these national leading topics. I think the first one, off the top of my head is sustainability. We made this commitment for divestment. And we were one of the first few Ivies to do so. And so keeping that promise and really reaching that sustainability goal, our carbon neutrality goal, how do we make infrastructure more sustainable? How do you use technology on campus more sustainable? We have to really not just say the-- talk the talk, have to walk the walk and really commit to this at the trustee level.

I think we also have a lot to do in terms of spearheading the ways that we want to talk about diversity inclusion on campus. Taking and putting the president and her administration accountable for the anti-racism initiatives. And I think as an institution, we can lead the country, in terms of diving into these conversations and providing those spaces and resources for everybody here at Cornell. So I'll leave it at that. Again, pleasure talking to all of you today.

DAVID DUNHAM: Thank you so much, Jeff. Afua, would you like to go next for closing statements?

AFUA ASANTEWAA: Sure. So yeah, I want to say thank you to everyone for tuning in today and listening. As I mentioned, I'm an MBA candidate at the Johnson School. I feel like I worked really hard to get here to Cornell, and it's an amazing institution. But my thing is we can make it better. And I don't think we should settle. I don't think we should underestimate our own abilities. Cornell has leading programs in hospitality, in engineering, in the sciences, animal science, plant science.

And all these things, or all these programs and the people coming out of them, we're going to need them to tackle climate change, to figure out housing issues at large across the country, across the world. And so I think we really need to continue to support and uplift each other. I think we need to also extend grace. I know we talked about wanting the professors and the administration to support us. But I know, too, that they've been sort of thrown into the fire with all of this. And so I want a seat at the table to help them do that and to give them that voice.

All I'll say is please vote for one of us, hopefully me. And also be a responsible citizen of the world and participate in our current election. And also be responsible to the community. Take the precautions necessary for COVID. Wear your masks, be kind to others, help others in need. But stay safe and have a great night. Thank you guys, so much.

DAVID: Thank you, Afua. Liz, would you like to go next?

LIZ DAVIS-FROST: Yeah, so again like everyone else said, thank you all for being here tonight. I know personally, I've been on the struggle bus a little bit lately with these academics, but things have been pretty bleak. But I appreciate people taking the time out of their day to come listen to us talk about our platforms and the things we're passionate about.

I also hope that everybody's taking space for themselves and making sure that they're OK and giving themselves the love and care that they need and supporting their friends and their loved ones. So yeah, I've dedicated the past four years of my life to doing this work on campus and trying to make Cornell a more equitable and accessible and accountable place for everybody. And I think Cornell has done this in the past, but something that we can continue to do in the future is lead by example.

So to answer your question, I think as a trustee member, if I were to get this position, obviously, I would continue to hold the people in the room accountable and to pressure them to really have these tough conversations, and really unlearn all of the things that have created this traditional, predominately white institution. I think there's a lot of work to be done. And I think it's going to be difficult.

And I honestly think it will go past whoever, whichever of us wins, it will go past our two year stint as trustee. But I think whoever is in this position right now, considering the climate of the campus and of the world and of the country, is in a very imperative and vital position to start conversations and to start laying foundations for the things that we need to get done.

So I know I'm personally running to be everybody's trustee. I want to know what is getting down-- like I want to know the down and dirty, the nitty gritty of everything that anybody on this campus is experiencing. And I want to make sure that everybody on this campus has the opportunity to wake up every morning with a smile on their face and do the things they need to do again to get this degree and officially collect their coin when they're done.

So yeah, I genuinely would love if anybody had any questions or comments or any input about anything if you would reach out to me. My net id is ED466, and I'm sure there will be a way to reach any of us if you have any questions or comments. But yeah, I would love to talk to anybody if you have anything else you want to chat about. Yeah, that's it. I'm excited that I got to have the opportunity to talk for a little bit. I do have to write a paper tonight, which will not be fun. But yeah, thank you for having me.

DAVID DUNHAM: And thank you. And now, Vince.

VINCE HARTMAN: Thanks Liz, and everyone. And also thank you, David, for leading us tonight. I know you're not running and you're just interested in just the general process of seeing democracy at work as this student trustee position. And it's actually kind of incredible. I'd like to also say just for Cornell to have this ability to be a student and to have a voice on the board of trustees. It's very unique and to bring the student voices to them.

So really what I want to stress in my last statement is that with your vote for me and with that voice, I would work tirelessly for students to ensure that Cornell can do better and should do better for us, right now. Be it, like as I was saying, not committing to raising tuition further during a pandemic, offering more resources to graduates during COVID, more mental health resources, and supporting our international community.

And so I would 100% work with students on behalf of those issues and plenty of others, listening and working for everyone. And I want to say thank you to everyone. And as I said in the beginning, I'll finish off by saying, please visit my website, www.vincehartman.com, to learn more about me and my platform. And then lastly, also just generally vote for the National election, and preferably for Joe Biden.

DAVID DUNHAM: On that note, thank you. Thank you, thank you very much. And let me just say, wow, what outstanding candidates you all are. And I hope that the three of you who do not become trustees, whoever you are, that you find a way to continue to be leaders in your field and that you continue to be leaders at Cornell. Please stay in contact with me and the GPSA so that we can work together in the future. And thank you all to the audience who have been with us through to listen to all of these questions. I'm sorry if there wasn't anything-- if there's something that I didn't have a chance to get to.

And please remember to vote between October 31 and November 4th. And I believe information will be going out shortly about how you can do that. So with that, I wish everyone a good night and that you all stay safe and healthy and that you and that you all go vote if you haven't done so already. Yeah, thank you very much.

VINCE HARTMAN: Thanks, David.

DAVID DUNHAM: All right. Bye-bye everyone.