

AJ Plummer: Good evening everyone and welcome to tonight's annual Cornell College Alumni All-Call. My name is AJ Plummer and I serve as the Director of Development here at Cornell. I'm going to be serving as host for this evening's call. Now, before we get started by introducing the others, joining me here this evening, I do just want to take a brief moment to invite you to join our conversation. You can do that tonight by pressing star three on your phone and getting in the question queue. Get in early and have your questions submitted to us and we'll love to take it. It's a bit like raising your hand in class, so it's not going to interrupt us at all, but it will let us know you have a question and we'll be able to take it. We are hoping to get to as many of your questions as possible tonight, so please do join that queue. Again, that's star three on your phone.

AJ Plummer: And just to be upfront and to be mindful of your time and for those who do wish to view the State of the Union immediately following the call, we are going to end promptly by 8:00 PM Central Time this evening. So I think with that said, I'm going to go ahead and turn this over to President Jonathan Brand to introduce himself and the others who will be joining him this evening. Jonathan?

Jonathan Brand: Well, thanks AJ. Hello, everyone. Glad to have you on the call with us. As AJ mentioned, my name is Jonathan Brand. I am finishing up, it's amazing to say this, I'm finishing up my 11th year at Cornell College. It's been a really fast 11 years. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to our fearless provost, Dr. Ilene Crawford, for her introduction. Again, thrilled that you are all on the call with us this evening.

Ilene Crawford: Good evening. It is wonderful to be on the phone with all of you tonight. My name is Ilene Crawford. I am the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at Cornell. It's hard to believe that I'm finishing my second year at the college and what a two years it's been. I've been able to do that with the wonderful team here and wonderful colleagues. So hello to everyone. I look forward to your questions. I'm going to turn things over to my colleague, Wendy Beckemeyer in Enrollment Management and Athletics. Wendy.

Wendy Beckemeyer: Hello, everyone. It's so great to see all of you virtually tonight, through the phone lines. I've been at Cornell for just over a year and a half and just really am enjoying the warm and welcoming community as well as my colleagues at the College. Looking forward to your questions tonight, and I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Dan Layzell, who is both the CFO and the Chief Operating Officer.

AJ Plummer: Dan, this is AJ. I don't think we can hear you. Is your phone muted by chance?

Dan Layzell: Oh, it is. Thank you. Technical difficulty. I am Dan Layzell and thank you, Wendy. I have been here since October of 2020. For the seven years prior to that, I was in Louisiana at LSU. So for those of you who are familiar with today, happy Mardi Gras.

AJ Plummer: Perfect. Well, thank you. Thank you all for joining us this evening. Again, if you're just joining call here, just a reminder that you can get into the screening queue by pressing star three on your phone. Again, it's just like raising your hand, it's not going to distract us here, but it will allow you to get your question in.

AJ Plummer: So I think we are going to start with a pre-submitted question actually from Marta from Wooster, class of 1974, she asks, "I'm wondering how the new programs and degrees, which seem to focus on technology mesh with the humanities that are at the heart of Cornell's existence and curriculum." Ilene, would you like to take that?

Ilene Crawford: I certainly would. Marta, thank you for your question. And those of you who had similar questions, if you've been looking at our website and our news releases, you'll see that we're really proud to be rolling out several new majors this semester and in the fall semester. We have data science that we've implemented for this semester, applied statistics and environmental science and sustainability. In the fall, we're looking forward to rolling out a revised biology major. That's going to be ecology and evolutionary biology and then environmental justice and sustainability. Marta is not wrong. Many of those have a tech flavor to them, but I will assure you all that we are still a liberal arts institution. It's really important that we continue to focus our curriculum around the questions about, what does it mean to be human in this day and age? What does that mean historically? What does that mean going forward?

Ilene Crawford: So one way that we'll continue to do that. I mean, many of these majors have applied options for them. And we know that in any discipline, working with data is going to be important going forward into the 20th century, 21st century. So there are opportunities for all of these to do data science, applied statistics in different areas of knowledge. And that includes the humanities and some really interesting work that's being done on that frontier. We also have our ingenuity core curriculum and that really ensures that every major that we offer at the college continues to be in a liberal arts context, investigating those questions about what it means to be human.

Ilene Crawford: So our foundations courses introduce students to interdisciplinary thinking and inquiry. Our explorations courses, make sure that students investigate different areas of the curriculum. And our experiential learning opportunities with some generous funding for our ingenuity and action component of our curriculum, make sure that we give students funded opportunities to explore and apply their learning off campus as well. So all of those is really thinking about what it means to be a liberal arts institution in the 21st century. And we're really excited to be moving in this direction. So thank you for your question, Marta.

AJ Plummer: Thanks so much, Ilene. We are going to take a live question here in a second. Just a reminder, star three to get into that question queue. We'd love to have

your question asked live this evening. So we are going to go live with Carol from Madison, Wisconsin, who has a question about national and international distribution of students. Carol, you are live with the group.

Carol: Hi. Yes. So my question is, it's really two parts. The first is I'm interested in the national and international distribution of students in the Cornell student population now, either just the freshmen if that's the information you have available, or the student body as a whole. And as a follow up to that, what is the current foreign language requirement for incoming students and on campus?

Ilene Crawford: So Wendy, you want to take the first part of that question and I'll take the second part?

Wendy Beckemeyer: That sounds great. Carol, thanks for your question. We have a census report that we share with the campus community every fall after our students have entered into the institution and have finished their first block. In this year's entering class, about 30% of our students were from Iowa. But then of course, we had students from many other states, including Illinois, Minnesota, Colorado, California, Texas, Nevada, over into the Eastern states in Pennsylvania, in North Carolina in the South. I mentioned Texas already, but also we have students from New Mexico and from Florida. So we really have had terrific reach on a national level.

Wendy Beckemeyer: For international students, we had 10 students in this year's entering class, this is back in the fall again, which represented about 3% of our entering student body. And about 25% of our students coming in this fall were domestic students of color. In our international populations, in part due to COVID, it's certainly been challenging to work through the visa process and get students into the United States, but we've seen some really great increase in interest. And so we hope to see that number rise.

Wendy Beckemeyer: When we look at the overall student body, about 29% of the students are from Iowa. So that's very consistent with the entering class. Then again, there's that reach, which is very wide all across the United States. As an example, 5% of our students are from California, 9% from Colorado, 8% from Minnesota. Just to give you a sense of what it looks like for the distribution of the entire student body. And still 3% international across the whole student body and about 22% domestic students of color. Ilene, did you want to answer the foreign language question?

Ilene Crawford: I did. I did. Thanks. So Carol, the second part of your question was about our foreign language requirement and our ingenuity core curriculum has a number of components to it. And one aspect is essential abilities. So four key skills that we think are essential for every graduate to have the function in the 21st century. And those essential abilities are writing, quantitative reasoning, intercultural literacy, and world language. So we do make sure that all students

have a foreign language experience. At this time, the requirement is the equivalent of a third semester. So three courses in a world language in order to meet that requirement. So thanks for your question, Carol.

AJ Plummer: All right. I think while we're waiting on a few more people here, just a reminder star three to get into that question queue. We're going to go with another submitted question. This is from Dan, from Sun City, Arizona, "What has happened to the concept of operating the school on 10 blocks, reaching into the summer and allowing students to complete their studies in less than four years?" Ilene, would you feel comfortable answering that?

Ilene Crawford: I sure would. Dan, thank you for your question. We are still operating on a 10-block schedule. You might remember that we moved in this direction a couple of years ago. So our faculty developed and approved a block nine and a block 10 over the summer. We're doing that again this year and for exactly the reasons that you describe. It's an excellent opportunity for students to catch up or to get ahead over the summer. Last summer, we had 17 courses that we offered and we had over 140 students participate in summer courses and complete summer courses. So we're in the process of building the summer schedule for this year and then are hoping for similar results and we look to go forward, having run that experiment a few summers to be able to continue with those block nine and block 10 offerings for students.

Ilene Crawford: We do think that they allow parents and families good value, good flexibility in a way for students, like I said, to be able to catch up and to get ahead with their planned studies. Because we also offer those courses online on the Acadium platform that we share and participate on with other independent colleges, we are also able to welcome non Cornell students into those summer courses. And so that's been an experience that we've had over the past summer. And so we're excited about that opportunity to grow an audience for our classes beyond our immediate Cornell population in the summer. So thanks for your question, Dan.

Jonathan Brand: And Dan, this is Jonathan brand. If I can add one comment, which I thought was ... So a couple years ago, as we were gearing up for strategic planning, we had collected some data from prospective students and their parents about what they were looking for in a college or a university in their higher education experience. Interestingly, we found that students by and large weren't interested in graduating in under four years. Sooner, they were looking for that return on their investment. They wanted their four years. Now that's not to say that there aren't some students obviously, who'd like to get through college a little bit more quickly. But interestingly, what we found and I was surprised, I suppose pleasantly, is that students looking at Cornell, they want their four years of experience, of the college experience.

- Jonathan Brand: So not to say we shouldn't give them the flexibility and the ability to graduate sooner or to take more courses even over more than the traditional academic year. But I just thought I'd share that. It was sort of an interesting outcome finding from the research we had done in serving perspective students.
- AJ Plummer: Perfect. Thanks so much for those answers. We are going to take another live call here. We are going to go to Jack in Snellville, Georgia, who has a question about the current morale on campus in light of the pandemic. So Jack, you are live with the group. Go ahead and ask your question.
- Jack: Well, first, thanks to everybody on the call for your exceptional leadership of the college, especially in the trying time of the pandemic. I'm just curious, how's morale on campus? Really concerned about the students, especially, but also about the faculty and staff. I'll let whoever can answer on those to do the best again.
- Ilene Crawford: Well, hi Jack, it's Ilene. I'll kick things off here and then I'll let my colleagues fill in as well. I think it's safe to say that after two years of the pandemic, we are tired and we are looking forward to transitioning to late pandemic or post pandemic existence. However, you want to describe that. But we've been really good, I think in the past two years about pivoting as we need to adapt to different circumstances. So this year, for example, the last couple months, we've tightened up our masking requirements across campus to reflect the rise of the Omicron wave. Now that those cases are tapering off, we are just getting ready to transition back to where many spaces on campus, masks will be optional again and faculty will have the choice as to whether or not to require masking in their classroom for the last couple blocks of the year.
- Ilene Crawford: So we've really used the block as a tool to adapt to whatever circumstances of the pandemic that we've been experiencing. I think we have also tried to help faculty and staff and students be able to make time for themselves and strike some balance during these challenging times. We've certainly asked ourselves questions about what do we absolutely have to be doing right now, and can we stop doing some of those things in order to focus on our health and wellness and our mental health and that's for faculty and staff and students as well.
- Ilene Crawford: So students we know have responded really positively this year to being back in the classroom and faculty have been able to incorporate online elements to their courses this year, as they've needed to do. And in some ways those enhanced student learning. So we've built a lot of capacity that we don't want to let go of. At the same time, we recognize that students really value a lot of in person learning, and it's been great to be able to move in that direction more and more this year. And we're looking to do so even more in block seven and eight this year. So I think that gives you an overview of how things have been going, but maybe I can toss it back to President Brand to see if he has anything else to say on that point.

- Jonathan Brand: No, no, thanks Ilene. I think that's a great response and I think it captures the complexity of the last couple years. But as always, our students rise to the occasion.
- Ilene Crawford: As do our faculty and staff. It's just been really tremendous to see how they've been able to navigate the past two years. And like you at home with complicated family situations, having small children in school and other types of workplace situations to navigate. We've really tried to approach this by offering everybody as much flexibility as possible. And we think that's been the key to our success in coming as far as we have through the pandemic.
- AJ Plummer: Great. Our next question here is we are going to go to Isaiah in Ankeny, Iowa, who has a question about diversity and a second question, it looks like about enrollment. So Isaiah, you are live with the group. Go ahead and ask your question.
- Isaiah: Perfect. Thanks for taking my call. Always excited to talk to you Jonathan and hear from the rest of the staff as well too. Just wondering as well too, and I know we got a little bit of an update on enrollment patterns in terms of diversity, but one of the questions I'm always interested in, as you know, is just what type of supports, particularly as the marginalized students continue to grow in population on campus, what continued supports are being offered to them to support them? I know there's been some new hires lately as we well too with lived experiences in that matter.
- Isaiah: The other thing I'm just also wondering too, just in light of Cornell's kind of unique position in terms of its population and its offerings in the State of Iowa, how do you see just how Cornell continues to position itself in the State of Iowa compared to relative other colleges and the universities, as well as to be frank, looking at other liberal arts colleges across the country, knowing that many of them are struggling with enrollments and even their viability?
- Ilene Crawford: Well, Isaiah, this is Ilene. Why don't I start off with this one and then Wendy, I'll pass it over to you. How about that?
- Wendy Beckemeyer: Okay.
- Ilene Crawford: So you were asking about supports for students of color on campus and underrepresented students on campus. And depending on how recently you've been on campus, you may or may not be familiar with our Intercultural Life Office. This is a office that supports with programming, but also individualized mentoring, is able to provide programming that supports students from a wide variety of backgrounds on campus. We just came through Black History Month and had a lot of terrific celebrations there, and a lot of programming that was in support of that month as well.

- Ilene Crawford: We have just launched on campus a Student Success Center that is for all students, but is with an eye to being able to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population as well. So we have five staff members in that office really meant to be able to work with students from the point of admission until we pass them off to their major that they declare in their sophomore year, but have staff that are particularly focused on one on one mentoring in intensive academic advising, providing supports for students that are student athletes, students that have additional services and disabilities services that they get from the college and other forms of support as well, tutoring and all kinds of elements of student success.
- Ilene Crawford: We're pleased with the way that these different offices work together to be able to support an increasingly diverse student population. We know that when we build that student experience for success that we're impacting the success of all students on campus as well. So it's been a great partnership with Intercultural Life and that's headed by our Senior Diversity Officer Hemie Collier. And so he is also chair of our Diversity Committee on campus and he's been spearheading a lot of the campus-wide efforts to continue to increase and support the underrepresented students that we have on campus.
- Ilene Crawford: Wendy, I'll pass it over to you, because I think some of Isaiah's questions were also about just what our numbers look like and what our recruitment efforts continue to look like in the state.
- Wendy Beckemeyer: Thank you. Isaiah, thanks for your question. In the State of Iowa, one of the things that we experienced in the last year is a 50% increase in the number of students from Iowa. That was coupled with a great increase in overall new student enrollment, almost 30% year over year, which was not what we saw from other national liberal arts institutions in the State of Iowa. So our entering class was right around 404 this last fall. We are continuing to see great growth this year as well. We're slightly ahead of last year. And last year was really quite a banner year for us.
- Wendy Beckemeyer: The things that have propelled us in a way that is different than our counterparts, both in the state of Iowa and in the ACM, which would be the Association of Midwest Colleges as well as other national liberal arts institutions across the country is in part, the block scheduling, which is very attractive and I think has heightened its attractiveness during the pandemic in terms of its flexibility and being able to talk even more persuasively about the benefits of the block, the one course at a time opportunity, but also our affordability initiatives. You start coupling that with the great new programs that are being offered in academic affairs and some of the recent success now that we're seeing in athletics. There's just a tremendous amount of momentum for Cornell.
- Wendy Beckemeyer: The affordability initiatives include the Iowa Promise Scholarship, which I think from an accessibility standpoint and transparency standpoint, really

important in terms of building a diverse population of students. No red tape, no extra form. If you live in the State of Iowa and you get admitted to Cornell College, you'll receive a \$30,000 scholarship. So we saw a 3% increase in diversity in our entering class in part because of being very transparent and accessible upfront. We've extended that scholarship, calling it the Freeway Scholarship in five contiguous states around the institution in the State of Iowa. And so we've seen now increases in Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

Wendy Beckemeyer: And then we have a brand new program. Matter of fact, people were just notified today. We have a debt reduction program, where we're partnering with students related to their federal student loan debt and will meet, essentially pay up to \$12,000 of a student's federal loan debt upon graduation, provided that they meet very few requirements, live on campus, graduate in four years, be a student in good standing. And so we've just selected our first group of debt reduction pledge students as well and they were notified today. Thank you for your questions.

Ilene Crawford: Yeah. Isaiah, one thing that we can also speak to is just how important it is that our faculty and staff reflect our diversifying student population as well. One thing that we're working on is, with some intentionality to increasingly diversify our faculty and staff as well. So we've been able to put in place a faculty equity officer and a staff equity officer this year at the College with an eye towards looking at our hiring processes and practices. We've had really, really good results with that. I'm pleased to say that our finalists pools for different full-time faculty positions that we run this year, have all had people of color, women in those finalist pools. And we've gotten some really positive feedback from candidates as well about some of the changes that we've made to our search processes.

Ilene Crawford: And on the staff side, we've got some important searches coming up as well. And we really treat each and every one of those as opportunities to seek out the most diverse pool possible of qualified candidates so we can take every opportunity to continue to diversify faculty and staff on the campus. Our students, it's important to see, as they look around, a faculty and staff that looks like them. So thanks for your question, Isaiah.

AJ Plummer: Thanks Wendy and Ilene. Just a reminder to everybody listening in that we are here to chat with you and would love to hear your question and take it live this evening. Again, in order to get into the queue, just press star three on your phone and chat with one of our staff members to get your questions submitted.

AJ Plummer: Okay. We are going to go to Mary in Arvada, Colorado who has question about our long term strategic planning. Mary, you are on live. Go ahead and ask your question.

Mary: Hi, y'all. My question is, I know that COVID has stood in the way of a lot of being able to move forward and everybody kind of was at a standstill, but I know that Cornell was in the process of several kind of thinking strategically about what the future of Cornell looks like. So my question is, A, where are we in strategic planning? And if you can talk through some of the things that you're working on and how those have been impacted by COVID. Yeah, that would be awesome. Thanks.

Jonathan Brand: Mary, great to hear your voice. Thank you for these questions. This is Jonathan. Let me take your two questions in order. In fact, last year, in the middle of COVID, on campus, we completed a really, really disciplined, terrific evidence based data driven strategic planning process. Really planning while flying the airplane following COVID, in the middle of COVID and with the derecho. Let me say that at the highest level, this strategic plan articulates this vision that is really culture based on campus, which is to say the dream that we expressed in that plan is that we're a college where faculty and staff together anticipate students' needs, even before students know that they have those needs and that we then are able to, with confidence, deliver to our students this educational experience that prepares them to thrive in the world after they graduate.

Jonathan Brand: And what I love about this vision and this plan is that it focuses on our students. It also focuses on our faculty and staff that an institution that will thrive into the future is one that can predict confidently what students will need before our students even say to us, "This is what we need, or this is what we want." And all while doing this, of course, in developing this plan, we also asked ourselves, and I think every plan, every initiative has to answer three questions. What do students need? What do students want? And what can we do at Cornell that nobody else can do? And every initiative ought to answer those three questions.

Jonathan Brand: And so when we develop this plan and I will say, if you go online, you'll find my last white paper is a summation, a summary of the strategic plan. And I encourage you, anyone who's listening to go on and to read. It's short and it's intended to be a summary. In that plan, we really focus on three big areas underneath that vision that I just articulated, which is one, again, responding to students, wants and needs. And I'll come back to that in a second. Two, and this goes to Isaiah's earlier question about expanding and diversifying our markets. And then the third part is the strategy around doing things differently, which is really about the nature of work and supporting our culture on campus, our community of students, faculty, and staff.

Jonathan Brand: What I would say interestingly, and I don't think many other schools in the country experienced this. We came out of COVID in some ways stronger than we started. I can't tell you the number of schools that called us at the beginning of the pandemic and said, "We're really interested in the one course calendar, the block plan. Could you tell us how you do it?" Or, "How could we adapt our

schedule to that?" Because it provided the ultimate amount of flexibility for our students, for our faculty, for our staff. It still does.

Jonathan Brand: So what COVID did, and we're not out of it yet, coming out of last year though, it accelerated everything in our strategic plan and I think even strengthened the foundation from which we plan. And it didn't hurt, for example, as Wendy had mentioned that we recruited. Our incoming class was almost 30% larger than the preceding year's incoming class. Our retention results, last year of our first year class, 4% higher than the year before. Last year, we raised, thanks to all of you and other alumni and friends, we raised more money last year at Cornell College than any year in the history of Cornell College. So all of that I think gave everyone a boost.

Jonathan Brand: And I'll also say for anyone who's on the board or a member of the faculty and staff, our board of trustees felt so strongly about the work of our faculty and staff last year and really during these hard moments of COVID that they supported, they themselves raised enough funds so that every benefit to eligible employee at Cornell could receive a \$1,350 bonus. I think that was also a nice little lift for everyone.

Jonathan Brand: As we look now into the future of strategic planning and how COVID has impacted our long-term planning, one, as I said, we came out of COVID and I think put us in a good place in terms of planning, but it accelerated everything. So for example, we know in a very competitive environment, students are very value focused. They want experiences that will set them up for success after they graduate and they don't want to graduate with a lot of debt. They wanted to be back on campuses. So not just were they looking for a return on the investment, they were looking for a return on the experience. When you think about the block plan, the one course calendar, Ingenuity in Action, which not just requires all of our students to have experiences out of the classroom, which is what they need, it also ensures that the funding is there for them to make sure that they can actually have those experiences.

Jonathan Brand: So I think it's accelerated for us all of what was in our plan. Technology, recognizing coming out of COVID with so many class across the country that were online, our students expect and demand seamless, high quality, easy technological experiences, not just in the classroom, but experiences that wrap around, technology that wraps around their classroom experience.

Jonathan Brand: The only other part of this, Mary, that I'd love answer is really focused on faculty and staff, which is here's one area where COVID has really impacted our long term strategic planning, which is the days of everyone coming into the office from 8:00 to 5:00 or 9:00 to 5:00, those days are over. I mean, we are obviously a very campus based. I mean, we serve and support our students on campus. That's not going to change. By the same token, we have to be more flexible with employees, with faculty and staff. And frankly, because this is a campus where

we trust each other, nobody ever went to work and said, "Today, I'm going to do a terrible job." It's really a moment for us to recognize that we're also student focused and we have to give people the flexibility and the support to do their jobs in ways that also work with their personal circumstances, and COVID really brought that to the fore for us.

Jonathan Brand: I hope that, that is a responsive answer. And thank you very much, Mary, for asking it.

AJ Plummer: Thanks so much President Brand. While we are waiting here for just a few seconds for the next question, just a reminder, you can get into the question queue, star three on your phone. You press that and you'll be able to join the question queue. We'd love to take your question live tonight if we have the opportunity to get to it.

AJ Plummer: While we're waiting for that next question to come in here, I just wanted to share three important upcoming dates with you real quick. First, our day of giving, Color it Purple, is fast approaching on March 30th. We're really hoping for a strong show of participation from alumni and friends this year. Secondly, President Brand and his wife, Rachelle, are going to be traveling with Cornell alumni to Normandy, France later this summer on June 25th through July 5th and spots are filling up quickly. So if you'd like to learn more about that trip or register for it, you can visit our alumni website. And then lastly, mark your calendars for homecoming this fall. It's going to be on October 21st through the 23rd. It's going to be a great time. We're going to have lots of festivities and really hope that many of you will be able to come back and join us on the Hilltop.

AJ Plummer: Okay. I think our next question is in. We're going to go to Justin in Denver, Colorado, who has a question about what you all are most excited about, it looks like. Justin, you are on live with the group. Go ahead and ask your question.

Justin: Hey James, it is Justin. I would like ... Well, first, I want to say super exciting that we cross that threshold of 400 incoming students. That is awesome. I'm curious if we could do a little round robin because I can appreciate you all have your own goals and focuses. What are you most excited about in the coming six or 12 months? We'll leave it open ended and I'm [inaudible 00:36:20] first. Thanks.

Jonathan Brand: So Justin, first, I'm going to say I'm most excited about what you're doing in this world. You're awesome and it's great to hear your question. So focused on campus, what I'm most excited about and this may be a spongy answer. I'm excited about a campus-wide feeling of momentum, energy, confidence, and winning. We are winning right now and I want that to keep growing and I want that sense of again, of momentum and excitement. That's what I'm most excited about because we're on that path right now. I'm going to turn it over to Dan.

Dan Layzell: Thank you Justin and thank you Jonathan. I think in addition to what Jonathan noted, what I'm most excited about kind of coming out of the pandemic is, we are investing in our facilities and our physical plant. As you may know, we completed the renovation of McLennan College Hall, which was a wonderful project. For those of you who ... Obviously, you're students here and most likely took classes in college hall, you'll be happy to know that it is now air conditioned. I think that certainly contributes to the learning environment.

Dan Layzell: We are well on our way to completing the Richard and Norma Small Athletics and Wellness Center expansion and renovation project. We are on time and under budget and that project will be ready beginning the start of next academic year. And it will not just benefit our student athletes, but it will benefit our whole campus community in terms of what it will provide.

Dan Layzell: We are now also at the very beginning of a comprehensive student housing planning effort, which again, we're taking a look at our student housing in light of our enrollment projections and student preferences. We will be completing this planning effort by late spring and get ready to move into the actual development and construction process. Those are just some of the things I'm really excited about, and I will turn it over to my colleague, Ilene.

Ilene Crawford: Okay, well, I thought I was batting cleanup here, but I'll jump in and then Wendy, I'll pass it off to you. So Justin, you're asking me to pick my favorite child here. I'm going to cheat in the same way that Dan has done and name a couple things that I'm excited about. One is Ingenuity, our core curriculum I'm really proud of. It's one of the things that attracted me to Cornell. And the Ingenuity in Action component of it, our experiential learning part of Ingenuity, most excited about because that is going to be able to fund students to have at least two off campus applied experiential learning experiences. And that's due to generosity of you and other donors on the call tonight. We've raised over \$18 million to be able to endow that program. Very, very proud of that and excited about how transformative that's going to be for our students education and to be able to be here while that takes shape.

Ilene Crawford: Other thing I'm excited about is our Student Success Center. Just in the first semester that we've had it in operation, our staff has pursued over 700 different calls and referrals for different students on campus. So it has been wonderful to see all those resources come together in order to shepherd students from the time that they enroll with us until they declare major and we pass them off to their major advisor. But all areas of student success are going to be an opportunity to really, really attend to those. So those are two things and I will turn things over to Wendy to be able to share what she's excited about. And Justin, I think we see you on campus in a few weeks, so I'm excited about that too.

Wendy Beckemeyer: Well, thanks Ilene. And Justin, thanks for your question. I love this question. I'd say I'm excited about the fact that I inherited a really strong leadership team and group of individuals who are out there working hard along with the rest of our community to recruit new students. I agree that 400 entering students, there's something ... And we often talked about this as we were getting close. There's a big difference between 399 and 400. And so getting over 400 was certainly a big, big win for all of us. The fact that athletics is part of the enrollment division is just very exciting to me. We've been able to do some great work together as a group with athletics, admissions, and financial aid. I personally have just a huge interest in background in athletics. And so I feel really lucky to be at Cornell and to have an opportunity to be part of a group like this.

Wendy Beckemeyer: Ultimately, what excites me the most is breaking records. We want to break some records. We want to take some lunch money and really just continue to contribute to the college in ways that are really fruitful for the institution. Lastly, I would just say that Cornell has really afforded the enrollment division flexibility to come up with new ideas, to be encouraged, to be trendsetters in the way that we're approaching affordability. I'm really grateful to all of the alumni who've given and invested in the institution to create a place where a professional like me could come from another institution and a background, maybe some other places and feel that sense of opportunity. So thanks to all of you for what you've created at Cornell, because it's a really exciting place.

AJ Plummer: Terrific. Thanks so much to each of you for sharing. That was great to hear. So we have received a number of questions and this is a timely question, I think. So, what's happening with King Chapel? Where do we stand on it? What is the building looking like and what's its future hold? Dan, do you want to try and take that question? It might be muted. Go ahead Dan. Yep.

Dan Layzell: Yep. Yep. King Chapel is alive and well. As you may know, we sustained campus-wide significant damage in the derecho of August 2020. We did not find out that there was damage sustained by King Chapel itself until about a year ago. Since then, we had been working with engineers and contractors on coming up with a plan to repair the damage that was done to King Chapel.

Dan Layzell: Just to give you a sense of the damage. The campus sustained 100 mile an hour winds for 45 minutes with, at times, 140 mile an hour gust. So it was significant. And again, we felt the damage all over campus. King Chapel did remain upright, but again, there is significant damage to the stone and the roof structure that is going to have to be repaired. We are in the latter stages of working through developing that plan with our engineering and contractor colleagues and anticipate having that plan finalized within four to six weeks. At which point, we will actually begin the repair process, which will last anywhere from six to 15 months.

- Dan Layzell: The good news is we were able to shore up the chapel so that it is sturdy at this point. We do not have any fears of further damage occurring, but again, the damage that was sustained was significant and we will be undergoing that restoration process over the next six to 15 months.
- AJ Plummer: Great. Thanks so much, Dan. Appreciate your response on that question. Just a reminder that if you still have a question that you've been holding out on us, please do press star three and hop into that queue now. We'd love to take your call if we get the chance here.
- AJ Plummer: So our next question, we're going to go to Elizabeth in Lombard, Illinois, who has a question about international study opportunities. Go ahead, Elizabeth. You're on with the group.
- Elizabeth: Hi, thank you. I'm enjoying all the responses and the questions. I was able to go ... And I graduated 60 years ago in 1962, and I went on the experiment in the international living the first year it was offered and I realized how important it is to see other places and people and to have time to absorb culture around you or different culture, different options, different art, so forth, architecture. I'm wondering what you offer now. What possibilities there are for students?
- Ilene Crawford: Well, thanks for your question, Elizabeth. Great to hear from an alum, fellow alum. Like you, I've had some international experiences that were really transformative and life changing. So I agree with you that it's really important to bake those into the college experience wherever we can do that. I've talked about our Ingenuity curriculum and our Ingenuity in Action experiences. Global experience is one of those categories that we encourage students to pursue. Those are funded opportunities to be able to support students to have a study abroad experience.
- Ilene Crawford: So that can look a couple different ways. We do have traditional semester study abroad programs that some of our students pursue. We have a student in Korea for example this year at Ewha University. So we do have some partnerships that can be a semester long or a yearlong, but many of our students pursue off study opportunities in the states or abroad with faculty members on faculty-led study abroad courses for a block. So those are very, very popular. And COVID, as you can imagine, has made that more difficult the last couple years, but we are really hoping to relaunch some of those opportunities in 2022-2023.
- Ilene Crawford: So we're just putting the course schedule now, but some of the off campus courses that faculty are hoping to lead next year include destinations in Eastern Europe to explore Holocaust and the human rights, course in Mexico. That's a Spanish conversation course. An economy course that would take place in China, some biology courses that would take place in Belize and also some courses in France as well. We also have a biology class that intends to go to Madagascar last year and a gender and development course in India, and a

course on changing Ireland. Anthropology course that's scheduled to go to Ireland next year. So you can see that our faculty really use all four corners of the globe to do one course at a time. We're really proud of that and hope to get back to our usual off campus study abroad offerings in the '22-'23 academic year. So thanks for your question.

AJ Plummer: Thanks so much, Provost Crawford. Our next question here, we are going to go to Scott, who has a question about some of the college's recent renovations. Scott, you're live with the group. Go ahead and ask your question.

Scott: Yeah. My question is with the COVID and everything like that and having the block plan, it seemed like a logical step for parents to want their kids to go to something that was very safe. That versus some of the improvements that are being made or have been made on the campus building wise, is that the reason for the uptick in the student population growing, or what do we kind of put this towards? I know the young lady that's in charge of adding kids to the roster here, she's done a very good job and I'm very proud of her, but I'm just wondering, are we seeing kids more athletes coming? Are we seeing more kids coming for science? Is there any kind of trend that we see?

Wendy Beckemeyer: Scott, this is Wendy. Thanks so much for your comments and your questions. I know that it means a great deal, not only to me, but to everyone who is lifting up the institution in building the enrollment that you can see their efforts. It's always interesting because even in the tough years, everyone works really hard, but I do think that the renovations that we're seeing on campus, as well as what we're doing related to financial aid, the fact that we, as an institution found a way to keep the campus accessible. There are some campuses that didn't allow any campus visitors. The COVID committee and others on campus worked very, very hard to make sure that we could, in a very safe way, continue to invite families to campus. And that seemed to be very important.

Wendy Beckemeyer: There are some recent renovations to the institution that I think are very exciting to prospective students and their families. You mentioned a few related to the science facilities, college hall, athletics facilities. We did see an increase in the number of athletes. 68 more athletes in this year's entering class than we saw the year before. 52% of the entering class were athletes at the entering class. And we're on track this year. We're expecting to be somewhere between 48% and 50%. Part of it was a much bigger entering class with football than we've had in previous years. It was right around 50. And the year before, it was closer to 20. And in some years, it's been smaller than that.

Wendy Beckemeyer: So there is some really good synergy that's going on around the campus, everyone working together. But absolutely when families are on campus, they're looking at facilities, they care about the quality of the labs and the ability to have top class facilities where the students are studying as well as what we're doing in terms of athletics and the health and wellness of all students, whether

they're varsity athletes or not, I think it's going to be also a really big winner. And so we've been able to leverage the investments that you all are making in our facilities towards our prospective students and people can really feel that sense of enthusiasm.

Wendy Beckemeyer: There's also a new space in the Thomas Commons, where families are being welcomed and it's a terrific first impression. We've all been in Thomas Commons, so we know what a nice facility that is and how alive it is with current students. So that first impression is also making a difference, I think in families visiting. Thank you.

Jonathan Brand: And if I might, Scott, just add to Wendy's great response. The importance of facilities, I don't think can be overstated. For example, one of the most exciting academic areas is engineering, ABET accredited, one of the programs that has the greatest interest from prospective students and incoming students. It wouldn't be possible had we not done the science facilities project in the Russell Science Center and West Science. McLennan College Hall with this finance lab, made possible by some really devoted alumni and friends of the college. Having economics and business grow the way it's growing would not have been possible at the same level that it has grown had we not renovated McClennan College Hall.

Jonathan Brand: So women's wrestling coming up, possible, thank you because of the Richard and Norma Small Athletic and Wellness Center. So the facilities have not just improved the student experience and the faculty staff experience they've allowed us to strategically invest in programs where, where we know students are interested.

AJ Plummer: Well, thanks so much for that answer. I think we are coming up on our time here, where we have time to take one more question here, and this was a question that was submitted online to us. This is a question about, were you able to build the endowment during the COVID pandemic? So what's the state of the endowment? Dan and Jonathan, would you like to take that question?

Jonathan Brand: Dan, I think you'll be in the best place.

Dan Layzell: Sure, sure. Actually, we came out of the pandemic very strong with regard to endowment. During the most recently completed fiscal year, fiscal year '21, which ended on June 30th of 2021, we had a 23% net return on our endowment, which was the strongest performance that we have had in recent years on our endowment. And I think there are a couple of reasons why we were able to do that. One, obviously, we were in a very strong market, financial market situation during that period of time. But I think as importantly, the board made a very strategic decision to change investment advisors during that period of time and also an investment philosophy to more of a passive management approach to our endowment.

- Dan Layzell: So again, we ended last fiscal year in a very strong position. And as of the end of December 2021, our endowment stood at \$97 million. Again, an all time high for the endowment. And we're certainly pushing on that \$100 million dollar threshold, which we feel very positive about despite the current ... Certainly, the turning in the financial markets that we're dealing with. So again, I think all in all, we're in a very strong position with regard to our endowment and feel very good about where we're going in the future.
- AJ Plummer: Thank you, Dan. Well, I am mindful of the time and we certainly want to be respectful of your time as well, as we promised. Jonathan, did you have any final words you wanted to share?
- Jonathan Brand: Yes. Thank you, AJ. I would love to say thank you to all of you. One of the great elements of American higher education is that our alumni and friends get to be a part of their schools after they graduate. And there's real magic happening on this campus. And when you look at our progress over the last 20 years, go beyond the last 20 years, 30 years, none of that would be possible without all of you. And every single student who says, "I wouldn't be here, but for financial aid. I wouldn't be here, but for my faculty mentor. I wouldn't be here, but for the Student Success Center or my advisors or the resident, or our RAs in the residence halls." That's all thanks to you.
- Jonathan Brand: And so on behalf of our students, faculty, staff, just know how thankful I am and we all are. And that's really probably the most important thing I could say to you tonight. You make Cornell Cornell, and our progress is thanks to you. So thank you.
- AJ Plummer: Well, thank you all again for joining us. Thank you to those on the panel tonight, the group sharing answers. We so appreciate your involvement as well. For any who are interested and able, we hope that you can cheer on the Cornell College men's basketball team in the NCAA national tournament. It's coming up here on March 4th. They're going to be taking on Wash U. So if you're able to a tune in, we hope that you are able to do that. Or if you are able to come cheer on the team in person, you would be most welcome.
- AJ Plummer: I am so sorry that we did not have time to get to all of your questions, but please do know that your question has been recorded and our staff is going to be following up on your question in the coming days. If you have a question that you haven't asked yet you can stay on the line after the call is finished, and you'll be able to leave a voicemail with your question and we'll follow up with you. So thank you again to all of you for joining us, and we wish you a very pleasant rest of your evening. Take care.