

Transcript: Cornell College Phonecast from April 24th 2019

Mickey Munley: Good evening everyone. My name is Mickey Munley, and it's my great pleasure to welcome you to tonight's Cornell All-Call featuring President Jonathan Brand and Dean Joe Dieker. A few housekeeping details before I introduce the two of our special speaker guests. If you have a question for our panel tonight, please press star-three on your phone. It's like raising your hand, you might be familiar from this from last year. It doesn't interrupt any of us, but it gets you in a queue.

Mickey Munley: We can get the general topic of your question, and then we can get to as many of you live to ask your question to President Brand or to Dean Dieker. With that, it's my great pleasure to say hi and introduce to you, in his eighth year, President Jonathan Brand. Jonathan, how are you tonight?

Jonathan Brand: I'm well. Good to hear from you, Mickey.

Mickey Munley: Thank you. Joe, how are you tonight?

Joe Dieker: I'm great. Thanks, Mickey.

Mickey Munley: Great, and-

Joe Dieker: Looking forward to-

Mickey Munley: Great. Joe, as you all know, is the vice president for academics, and he's the dean of the college, so quite an important role to have here. As we're finishing up dialing the last few thousand of you, again, a reminder, that if you have a question, please press star-three. It won't interrupt us. We'd like to get to as many folks as we can tonight. With that, I see, we're nearly finished. Pres. Brand, if you're ready, I know you have a couple of remarks off the top. Why don't you go ahead?

Jonathan Brand: Okay. Well, thanks, Mickey. Well, to everyone who's on the phone, let me just start by saying thank you. Thank you for taking time out of your busy lives, busy days, to connect with us, to connect with your alma mater. For those of you on the phone, you may remember that we held our first Cornell All-Call last February, 2018 and had gotten such good feedback, that we decided we'd give it another try, so here we are.

Jonathan Brand: To help you visualize, I am [with] the dean. We are in Old Sem, up on the second floor. Cole Library is right behind us, King Chapel, and not a cloud in the sky. I definitely want to make sure that we have time for your questions. In moving into the questions, I really am hoping that you have a chance to hear about our progress, what we've been working on, our initiatives, momentum we are generating, and also the challenges that we are, that we see in front of us, that we see ahead of us, that we think our sector is confronting.

Jonathan Brand: With that, you probably know this. Probably not a day when you don't turn on your computer or look at your phone or read a newspaper, and you can see that

this is a delicate and challenging time for higher education. It was hard before 2008, and it's I think gotten even harder, and there's information data that would suggest that it will get harder yet, and people worry about the future of schools like us, the demise of, not just for your colleges, but small residential liberal arts colleges that are committed to broad and deep education for all of their students.

Jonathan Brand: I mean, we're perceived to be out of touch with the needs of our students, expensive in our own bubbles, slow to make changes. Of course, all of this is within the context of a shift in generations of... We're moving into a new generation of students now with generation Z. If you look at the schools that are rural, small endowments, small colleges, we're, for scholars, considered to be in the bull's-eye of those schools most at risk, and we are acutely aware of that.

Jonathan Brand: When I say all this, it may sound depressing. It can be depressing if we want it to be, but that's not how we want it to be, and that's not how we see it. We see it as an opportunity for us to approach what we are doing, to approach what we do well, to approach what we don't do as well as we'd like with courageous honesty and to execute on our bold plans, always paying attention to what we do uniquely and well.

Jonathan Brand: Anyway, with that, for me, it's always like blocking and tackling. That's the key. You roll up your sleeves and you just work hard, and that's what we are doing, and that's what we're going to keep doing. With that, we need to hear from you, and you're the products of a Cornell College education, our most effective spokespeople and most passionate champions. The question that the dean and I have for you: What are your questions?

Jonathan Brand: What do you think we're doing well? What do you think we are not doing as well? Or, what do you think we need to improve as we move forward? Let's go ahead and turn to some questions.

Mickey Munley: Excellent. Excellent. Thank you, President Brand. Again, with that call to all of you, please press star-three on your phone. If you have a question tonight, we'll get the topic. We'll get you in a queue, and then we'll get to as many folks as we can. Right off the top, let's head out to, over to Freeport, Illinois to [Carl 00:04:56]. Carl, looks like he has a question about enrollment trends. Carl, you're on live with President Brand and Dean Dieker. Go ahead with your question.

Carl: My question would be, how is the trend the last three to five years as far as enrollment going at Cornell?

Jonathan Brand: Thank you for the question. Again, for a little bit of context, and I assume this is, to me, this is behind the question, because it's true. We're a very enrollment-driven college. We really rise and fall by our ability to recruit and retain students. One, again, a little bit of context. Over the last 20 years, our average

has been about 1,048 students. It's not as large as it needs to be, but that is our reality.

Jonathan Brand: As of this fall, when I say this fall, I mean, the fall of 2018, so eight months ago, we were at 1,033. There are schools that have been reporting drops of 100 to 300 students. We're a little bit lower than our 20-year average, but, as you can see, 15 students is not a huge drop. Our goal is to achieve comprehensive growth, and we know that at first blush, we're a school that's really equipped for 1,200 students, and that's what we need to get to as a first goal, and then we'll stop there and see where we are, so.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Great. Thank you. There was one question, and we had an alum who e-mailed today and wasn't able to be on, but it was an interesting question that everybody had here, and we thought we'd ask it. This is from Elizabeth, class of '66. Her question was, she has finished reading the Cornell Report about the Berry Career Institute and especially loves the quote by Professor. Todd Knoop 00:06:53], "The focus on the value of a college education is misplaced. Today's graduates should be more focused on the value of the skills that they can develop in college."

Mickey Munley: Elizabeth's question was, "Is the success of the Cornell program being modeled in other academic institutions? How unique is Cornell's program? Does the One Course At A Time curriculum enhance the success or effectiveness of this Berry Career Institute program versus, say, something more traditional?" A lot there, but something tells me, it's right in the wheelhouse of both of you, so that's the question from Elizabeth. Go ahead.

Jonathan Brand: Well, thank you for this great question. I'm going to start and then turn it over to our fearless Dean to continue. I will say, as I was reading the Cornell Report just this afternoon preparing, I actually zeroed in right on that very same comment from Professor Knoop. Let me first actually offer just some key facts for everyone. That, 95% of our graduates who are seeking employment are employed within their first 16 months, their first six months after graduation. That's been the same for the last couple of years.

Jonathan Brand: On average, about 55% of Cornell graduates go on to complete an advanced degree, 80% law school acceptance rate when the national average is about 85%, 76% of our medical... We have a 76% medical school acceptance rate, and that's compared to the national average of 39%. That is a, actually, on the medical school side, that is a huge factor. We regularly, this is a great question, we regularly measure critical learning as one example for our students to see what progress that they make over their time at Cornell, and we're able to compare that to the results at, of other colleges and universities across the country.

Jonathan Brand: Interestingly, because we know that employers, the number one skill that they really care about is creative and critical thinking. It's interesting to see that our students make gains that really outshine other schools. Is that because of the

block system? I'm not sure, but to see those results in that most critical learning outcome for our students is just huge. Now, I do want to talk a little bit about what employers are looking for and then turn it over to the Dean.

Jonathan Brand: We know overwhelmingly that employers are looking for students who can think critically, communicate both orally and in written format. That, they work well in teams. That, they work independently. That, they're agile. That, they're detail-focused. That, they're persistent, and that comes largely from, in part, from students having experiences off-campus, through experiential learning.

Joe Dieker: Right. With the Berry Career Institute, we brought all of our experiential learning together under one hub. We get students out doing internships. We get students out doing research. We get students studying across the world. We get students getting chances to work in their communities, and this is all part of that hands-on learning to develop those skills that Professor Knoop talked about in the article you mentioned.

Joe Dieker: It's really key in this day and age for students to get the academic skills, but also get that hands-on learning in various ways to be ready for this new workforce and ready for the world beyond Cornell.

Jonathan Brand: I'd like to just add one last thing the Dean Dieker's comment. Everything we do plays off of the strengths and the distinctiveness of the block system. When I meet with every single prospective student and their parents, I tell them, and this is the reality about Cornell, which is, if you're a serious, fill in the blank, thespian, musician, pre-med, law, serious athlete, and you know that it's important for you to get off campus, have out of the classroom experiences, it's very hard at most schools, at almost every other school to have your cake and to eat it too.

Jonathan Brand: When you're on the block system, you get to have your cake. You get to do both, and not just once or twice or three or four times. We have who will graduate after four years. They'll be pre-med. They'll be a serious volleyball player, and they will have gone abroad four different times. That's not possible anywhere else.

Mickey Munley: I'm jealous. If I could go back, I'd come back. All right. Now, let's head to [Doug Michaels 00:11:20]. I think you're in Asheville. You have a question about some mental health networking updates. Doug, you're on live with the president and the dean. Please go ahead with your question.

Doug Michaels: Thanks. I read with great interest though, the White Paper that was written by you, Jonathan, and John Harp regarding the behavioral issues on campus and how specifically Cornell was addressing them with developing the Cornell Well-being Network. I was interested in how that's playing out now that you have two new staff members, that you're... and doing different programs and

specifically, also, how the drug and alcohol issues that are a rise on campus are being dealt with.

Doug Michaels: I noticed you've mentioned several mental health issues in the white paper, but not the drug and alcohol, and familiar with all college campuses and knowing how that exists everywhere. Specifically, what are you all, how are you all moving towards a correction that are remediating, are being proactive about the whole situation?

Jonathan Brand: Well, Doug, thanks. It's great to hear your voice. As you mentioned, last year, in the fall, we launched our Cornell Well-Being Network thanks to a very significant gift from a Cornellian. The second we announced the creation of this program, multiple faculty members e-mailed me and said, in their time at Cornell, this may be the most important, exciting, necessary initiative that we have launched. I don't know how many of you might have read last year, Time Magazine, on their cover, it was last spring, so just over a year ago, talking about the mental health crisis.

Jonathan Brand: There is no doubt that we experience that within higher education. I mean, it's nationwide, but we've seen it in the United States. We've seen it on our campus. We joined every other school in this country seeing, grappling with students who have much more severe needs, anxiety, depression, unhappiness, loneliness, hopelessness, feeling this, feelings of being overwhelmed or being exhausted. No doubt that the trends that we've seen on our campus have tracked what we have seen nationally. More students are suffering from mental health and all of the ramifications that come with that.

Jonathan Brand: We took what we... Our vision is not just to meet the needs of our students, and I want to come to that in a second, it's also to be a model for higher education, so that other schools will say, "Let's go to Cornell College and see what they're doing, because they're doing it properly." We have thought about the Cornell Well-Being Network in three different areas. The first one, hopefully, this is and it feels intuitive was, first, we wanted to make sure that we had a program in place for students in crisis first and foremost.

Jonathan Brand: Last year, at this time, we didn't have on-site psychiatric services or tele-psychiatry services, which we now have thanks to a relationship with the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. We also are now providing transportation. We're in Mt. Vernon and a beautiful town. We're 20, 25 minutes from major hubs of services. Now, we provide transportation that is all gratis to our students for mental and physical well-being services.

Jonathan Brand: Then, we have programming for students who are not in crisis. You had mentioned, Doug, our two staff members. We have a health promotions coordinator who is really working on well-being initiatives for stress management, technology dependence, which is what you had mentioned. It's helping students to recognize what happens when they are dependent on, and

you can fill in the blank, dependent on X, helping them deal with work-through and increase resilience, coping skills, engagement and activities.

Jonathan Brand: All while this is happening, we're also, we've also created programming for our students' well-being activities and programming, so that they are, that they have more opportunities for social entertainment, mindfulness activities, things again that prevent them from ever being in a crisis mode. One other thing that I'll just mention as a service, as a part of the Cornell Well-Being Network that I love is, we're the only school in the country that's working with this, a startup company out in California, where students can call 24/7 and talk to a therapist, a friend for 45 minutes at a time to just articulate, express what they're feeling, again, as a way of preventing a crisis.

Jonathan Brand: We know that if students graduate, don't graduate, and they graduate with problems and with debt, we have served nobody. We're very excited about this program. At the end of this first year, we will, like with any good program, will assess its effectiveness.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Great. Thank you. That's a great answer. Now, we're going to go to Dorothy, who's a class of '18, who has a question about affordability. Dorothy, you're on live with the president and the dean. Go ahead with your question please.

Dorothy: Hi. I was just thinking, because I know that I have younger siblings who are thinking about attending Cornell, and I'm certain other people do too. I'm wondering what steps are being taken to make sure that tuition remains affordable for new students.

Jonathan Brand: Thank you. Thank you. Great to hear your voice. That is the big, one of the big questions that we are struggling with in higher education. Some believe that tuition increases are nationwide, are not sustainable. Our, and I'm proud of this, our three-year average for tuition is 2.8% each of the last three years, and that's great. By the same token, even though 99.8% of our students are on some form of financial aid, I think we can see acutely that that is not a sustainable path.

Jonathan Brand: Two years ago, our Board of Trustees undertook a study on our price, on our tuition, our sticker price. Again, sticker price is what we present to the world, and then we discount, sometimes, very heavily, often heavily with admitted or matriculated students. The study for the board two years ago concluded that we were priced about appropriately. That, our sticker price, what we were presenting to the world was about right.

Jonathan Brand: Just so you know, the upcoming, and I hope you're all sitting down, upcoming, our sticker price is about \$53,000. Again, we discount that probably by about 60%. This upcoming summer, our board actually, given the volatility in the market, the board is undertaking another pricing study. We have seen some

schools, for example, that have done tuition resets, that have cut their tuitions dramatically. We've seen other schools that have eliminated loans.

Jonathan Brand: I don't know what the answer is yet for us, but I think that in mentioning this to all of you, it's my way of saying, I think it's the Board's way of saying that the path that higher education is on does not feel sustainable, and we may be hitting a cracking point nationwide. We want to make sure that we're not caught on our, the back of our feet should that happen. I hope that helps answer that question.

Joe Dieker: If I could just jump in for a second, I think the bottom line is, we make it affordable for our students here, and we hear from our students that are here, that one of the reasons they came to Cornell, the first thing they say is, it's the block plan, and they say that we worked really hard to make it affordable. I think that's really important.

Jonathan Brand: Just to, again, to build off of Dean Dieker's comment, the average debt for our graduating seniors is \$34,000. No, excuse me, it's \$31,000. It's actually down \$3,000 from the year before, which is really excellent. That, again, we, we're not in the business of making money. We're in the business of educating our students and making sure that they can actually afford to be enrolled here.

Mickey Munley: Indeed, as in, I'm sure everyone on the call would agree. The great value of a Cornell education certainly pays great dividends to your life as well. Now, if, again, if you have a question, I wanted to remind you, press star-three on your phone. That's how you get in the queue. We will continue on. We're going to head over to Ames, to Larry. Larry has a question about faculty. Larry, you're on live with the dean and the president. Please go ahead with your question.

Larry: My question has to do with recruiting, salary competition against other schools that are not on the block program, and I'd like to know the length of stay of Cornell faculty. Is that changing? Is it going up or going down?

Joe Dieker: Sure. Larry, that's a great question. I'll quickly tell you, that when I got here, we had one faculty member who had been here 50 years and four others who are, have been here over 40 years. The longevity of faculty members is quite remarkable here. In fact, this year, we have one leaving us at 50 years of service. We haven't seen a lot of turnover in faculty, although we've had a number of retirements. We have a generation of faculty who are retiring.

Joe Dieker: We've had a number of searches. Our salaries are competitive in searches. I usually get our top or second choice in most cases. Some fields are more competitive than others when you get into some of the sciences or engineering and so forth, but we've had good success in attracting really fine faculty members to college. Our salaries are somewhat behind our competition, and that's something we need to work on to try to make them more competitive. On

the whole, our faculty are happy here, and they're doing a great job mentoring students.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Great. Thank you for that. Now, let's head down to Missouri, to Scott, class of '79, who has a question about endowment and recruitment I believe. Scott, you're on live with the dean and president. Please go ahead with your question.

Scott: Right. Actually, I had the privilege of spending some time with Jonathan down in Florida, and he talked about a couple of things that really sparked my interest and, really, I didn't understand about what was happening with small colleges and colleges in general. That was, one of them was the endowment, which is very important, and I would like him to address that with Cornell and how we field against other schools in the nation, and then expand the student draw, because it sounds like, to me, and I keep reading more information about how these colleges that draw from a small radius of kids are in dire need of financial support, or they're going to shut down. Dr. Brand, if you could address that?

Jonathan Brand: Would love to, and I'll take them one after the other about the endowment and just to say to everyone on the phone, if you have another chance to read my last White Paper on the demographics and how it'll affect Cornell College, a lot of what I'm about to mention is in that White Paper. The endowment which supports the college today and supports the college into the future, it, to me, the schools that will do well in the future are those that have strong financial foundations as measured in part by their endowments.

Jonathan Brand: For this White Paper, I went ahead and I took the top 100 national liberal arts colleges in groupings of 25 to measure their average, their mean endowment values. One to 26, their endowments were about, just under \$1.2 billion. Twenty-seven to 50 was just under \$500 million. Fifty-one to 75, those schools had an average endowment of about \$340 million, and then 76 to 102, the average was about \$209 million.

Jonathan Brand: Well, this year, we are ranked 81st among the national liberal arts colleges, which I will note, we've moved up in the last five years, higher than any other national liberal arts college. Ranked at 81st, our endowment of \$74.5 million is shockingly below the averages for all, for these groupings that I've just mentioned, and so that's why we're in a campaign. That's why growing the endowment is such an imperative today and into the future.

Jonathan Brand: It is also true that the other way that we ensure long-term sustainability is through the expansiveness, the geographic scope of our students. Those schools that are more regional in their nature, which is to say, students come from much closer to that school will be predicted to be at greater risk than those that are national or more elite schools. Well, interestingly, our students come from 47 states and from 19 different countries or foreign locations. They travel, on average, about 226 miles to get to Cornell, which is actually a further distance than even the top 25 national liberal arts colleges.

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Jonathan Brand: One of the great strengths that we have is the national and international reach of the school.

Mickey Munley: Great. Thank you, President Brand. Okay. Now, let's head out to California, to Claremont. Donna has a question about a community college partnership. Donna, you're on live with the president and the dean. Please go ahead with your question.

Donna: Thank you. I also wanted to mention that we received word from the Grabers today that Vivian Heywood has passed away, and I thought members of the alumni community might be interested in knowing that information. My question is, that we had understood that the college had established a relationship with a community college or another institution that was providing some students from Cornell. Is that accurate, or what is happening?

Joe Dieker: Yes. We have articulation arrangements with several community colleges. Basically, we look at a community college's curriculum, and if it's a good, solid liberal arts general ed curriculum, we'll accept that curriculum, have two years of work. Then, basically, they'll have two years left to finish at Cornell. We started that with Kirkwood Community College, which is right here in our backyard, and have expanded that now throughout the state of Iowa and even into other states, because this, in this day and age, students are moving from college to college.

Joe Dieker: We can't just rely on first-year students to come to Cornell. We need to help boost our enrollment with high quality students from community college who want to transfer here. In fact, we're quite appealing especially for honor students at community colleges, and we've had some terrific students come from community colleges. We studied their graduation rates and their success, and they're right up there with our normal Cornell students. This has been a win-win I think both for us and our partner community colleges.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Thank you. Great. Now, we're going to go to a question from John in Van Meter. John, I apologize. I just sent you back out of the queue, so I can say what John's question was. It was a really good one. He was curious about the amount of healthy debate and civil discourse across the political spectrum on campuses and was just curious about steps that Cornell is taking to ensure all viewpoints are represented, and maybe you could address that. I'm sure he would've been more articulate. I apologize, John, but, President Brand, maybe you could take that please.

Jonathan Brand: Yes. Thank you, John, for sharing this question. Let me just start by saying that this is a very diverse student body that we have and a very diverse school geographically, ethnically, economically, religiously, politically. Almost 30% of our students are students of color and international students. I feel very strongly that our central responsibility at Cornell is to help our students learn how to think for themselves, to not indoctrinate them. It's not to push them to embrace a particular viewpoint, right?

Jonathan Brand: We need to teach them the skills, so that they can develop their own viewpoints, habits of the mind. I think habits are, by their nature, a viewpoint neutral, right? Asking questions, challenging assumptions behind ideas, seeking evidence and facts, reaching conclusions, communicating them, and then opening them up for discussion and debate. Last year, well, I guess it's two years now, we, and when I say we, I mean, the faculty, the trustees, the students, we all approved the freedom of expression and civility statement that creates an absolute right for our students to speak and an obligation, I might add, for others, to let others speak.

Jonathan Brand: Then, below that creates an expectation, not a requirement, not an obligation, but an expectation that people will be civil with each other. That was the first important policy statement that, again, passed through faculty, Board of Trustees, students. That is a constitutional statement so to speak. Then, we passed a diversity and inclusion statement, which takes the most expansive view of diversity by recognizing the importance of difference, and when I say that, I mean, difference that includes political viewpoints.

Jonathan Brand: This statement was intended to place a value on all forms of speech, both conservative and liberal viewpoints and any other viewpoints. That's one thing I'll say. No doubt, we have faculty, staff... We don't ask our faculty and staff about their convictions. We have faculty and staff with a wide variety of religious affiliations, political party affiliations, political social interests, identities. We have students who serve on state or national political campaigns, even more during when we're in campaign seasons.

Jonathan Brand: Of course, we have alumni who are also, holds views across the political spectrum. The last thing I would say about this, which is, I would never want Cornell to be turned upside down in a crisis. There's just a part of me that thinks that if we don't have some... That, if there's not some debate, academic debate around ideas, then we're really not the vibrant academic institution that we aspire to be if there's not some tension around viewpoints, so I don't think we'll ever fully resolve this, because I don't... I think the academic enterprise requires us to have these difficult conversations that requires talking. They just have to be civil and respectful.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Thank you very much. We know we have lots of you still with questions, and we're doing our best to get to as many of you as possible, but we also have some people listening online, and they can type a question. I'm going to take one of those to be fair. This is from David Harsh. His question was, "Looking toward the future, is the program of One Course At A Time advantageous to the future of Cornell?"

Jonathan Brand: Yeah. Well, as we engage in a perpetual strategic planning, that is a question that'll, a lot of people including trustees are asking. It's a good question. Again, we have to approach every question with courageous honesty. We are about to engage in a marketing study. When I think about the value of the block system, I put it into three categories, which is, what does it allow students to do while

they're here that is not possible elsewhere? That's one. Two, what learning growth do we see thanks to the block system that's not possible elsewhere?

Jonathan Brand: The third one is, what outcomes, what do they do after they graduate that might be thanks to the block system? We have really great data about the opportunities that are greater thanks to the block system. Of course, we can have data about our alumni, you, and what you are able to do if you graduated after 1979, after one year on the block system. The marketing study that we're about to do is really going to explore whether we've made full use of the block system.

Jonathan Brand: I think before we can effectively assess whether the block system is a benefit or a hindrance, we have to first satisfy ourselves, that we've done a compelling job of using it, deploying it and talking about it. In my gut and I think the sense that others have is, that we haven't fully achieved that yet as a first order. I will say, 41 years now on the block, people on campus and those who studied under it are deeply wed to it, and that makes the conversation I think that much more important.

Joe Dieker: I'll just add that I think, for us, the block plan moved this school from a small regional college to a national college of appeal to students. That's really important in this marketplace today. If we hadn't done that 40 years ago, I think we'd be in a much weaker position than we are now. The block plan served us well in many ways. As Jonathan said, we still have to look at it and figure out how to best move forward with it into the future.

Mickey Munley: Great. This is moving on to St. Paul. We'll head up to St. Paul, to Steve, class of '92. He had a question about the residence halls. Steve, you're on live with the president and dean. Please go ahead with your question.

Steve: Good evening. Thank you for having this call tonight. My question is, is going into the future, how are we doing with our dormitories? Are they going to need to build another dormitory or refurbish the current dormitories that we now have on campus? Again, thank you for your answers.

Jonathan Brand: Thank you for the questions. About five, six years ago, we renovated Pauly-Rorem, Dows and Tarr. I mean, we took them down to the studs, recognizing that they had had the years of student life in them, and they had never been renovated. 80% of our first-year students live in Pauly-Rorem, Dows and Tarr. Even before we had done that, we renovated the bathrooms in Olin Hall and replaced the heating system and windows there. This is recognition that when you're a residential college, the residential experience is a critical part of the experience.

Jonathan Brand: If our residence halls don't meet the needs or expectations of our current students, let alone prospective students, then we are doing them a disservice. We're doing the school a disservice. Now, will we build up new residence halls?

Possibly. We are a school, I had mentioned earlier, equipped for about 1,200 students, and when I look at the demographic trends, recognizing that in about six years, actually, the number of high school graduates will start to decline for six or seven years.

Jonathan Brand: I think the days, frankly, of building new buildings may be coming to an end, and it's, the greater focus is going to be on ensuring that the buildings that we currently have are pristine and well-maintained and meet the needs of our students, faculty and staff.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Let's head out to Santa Fe, excuse me, to Santa Fe, to David, who has a question about the liberal arts. David, you're on live with the president and dean. Please go ahead with your question.

David: Yeah. Thank you very much. I'm a '66 graduate of Cornell and is, was obviously and still is considered a liberal arts school. Given the tremendous pressure that liberal arts colleges nationwide are under, given the rise of tuitions and the need for a payoff in terms of career, how is it that Cornell is now defining under that pressure, now defining what it means to be a liberal arts school and a liberal arts education?

Joe Dieker: Well, thanks, sir. Great question. We're definitely committed to the liberal arts education here at Cornell. At the same time, it can't be your grandmother's liberal arts college. It has to be a liberal arts college that's relevant for the 21st century. For the, about the last five years, we've been adding more professionally-focused majors in areas like business and engineering, neuroscience and so forth.

Joe Dieker: At the same time, we are now working on our core curriculum, some people call that general education, and making sure that our students are getting prepared for the 21st century and not a 19th century general education program that most students have experienced in colleges for years and years. Our faculty, in just about a month ago, approved of a brand-new curriculum we're calling Ingenuity that will launch in fall of 2020. We're going to make sure students get off to a great start with a common first-year seminar to make sure they're ready for study in Cornell in their first block.

Joe Dieker: In their second year, they're going to take a seminar we call Applied Citizenship, where, on a variety of topics, students are going to be out in the world dealing with real-world problems and grappling with the real-world problems. We want to make sure, and we mentioned this earlier in one of the questions, that the skills of things like writing and communicating, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, intercultural literacy are really important.

Joe Dieker: Then, we want to get all students, and we're going to require all students to get off campus and do some hands-on learning, things like research, things like working in the community, things like internships. We're really in the process of

reimagining our liberal arts education for the 21st century, but we're not, certainly not giving up on the liberal arts. We think it's really important.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Great. Thank you. Again, with a nod to our online listeners, so this is from Lars Clutterham. His question was, and I quote, "In light of these long-term trends, what's the future of specialty programs such as music and other arts majors?"

Joe Dieker: Great question, and nice to hear from Lars. I'll just say that I play in a clarinet quartet with some of our students, and we premiered a piece by Lars Clutterham just the other day. Great to have him on the phone. What we're finding is, there are still many students interested in the arts and probably as many students as ever, perhaps not as many majoring in the arts as in the past, so we get, many of our students here who are fine musicians, artists or theatrical performers who are majoring in other areas, but the arts remain vital here at the college.

Joe Dieker: We probably have 15% of our students involved in music, I would guess another 10% of the student population involved in theater and another group of artists who are really terrific. I just went to a senior art show the other night, it was fabulous. I would say the arts are alive and well at Cornell like everything else in higher education. The role is changing a bit but we still have many students playing a lot of good music here.

Mickey Munley: Alright, great. Thank you. Now, we're going to head to Estes Park, Colorado to Mark, who has a question about the relationship of Cornell and the church. Mark, you're on. Please go ahead with your question.

Mark: Good evening, President Brand and Dean Dieker. First up, thanks for your leadership that you're providing on all things Cornell. My question is just simple. When I attended Cornell in the early '70s, there was a relationship between the Methodist Church and Cornell, and I'm just wondering, what's the status of that relationship nowadays? Thanks.

Jonathan Brand: Well, thanks, Mark. Great to hear your voice. Cornell has been affiliated with the Methodist Church since 1853 since its founding. As many of you know, the religiosity in the United States has been on a decline for a period of time. We have maintained this relationship and it's maybe a part of your question, which was earlier this... in the winter, the United Methodist Church had a general conference in which it voted to ban LGBTQ marriages in Methodist Churches or from clergy, who themselves associate or identify as being members of that community.

Jonathan Brand: That vote, I will say, has been a painful one for members of Cornell who identify and feel included in that church, or know others who are close to them who are... who feel that way, feel that they've been invalidated by this decision to oppose same sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQIA clergy. I joined 89

other UMC-affiliated college presidents and heads of maybe 13 UMC seminaries in requesting and asking, demanding it might be too strong, that the church not take the stand that it's currently taking.

Jonathan Brand: I will say we remain fully committed to our community as inclusive as it is and nothing will change that commitment. We actually diverge from the church decades ago as it relates to same sex marriage. All of that said, the United Methodist Church level... at that level, it's not final yet, and we're going to watch carefully as the matter develops. Once we are presented with a final decision from the church, that's when we'll be able to consider what our relationship could be with the United Methodist Church going forward.

Jonathan Brand: As you would expect, given that we're talking 166 years of an affiliation, it takes... it will be done with care, consideration, the delicacy and the seriousness that it deserves.

Mickey Munley: Great. Thank you. We have a poll for you. Hang on, one sec while I get it set up here. The question is how many Cornellians? We're changing it up on you, I know, so use your keypad. The question is, how many Cornellians do you maintain some level of contact with over the course of a year? This could be classmates, faculty staff, coaches, fellow alumni from years or other areas. It doesn't really matter.

Mickey Munley: I'm just trying to get a sense of your Cornellian connectivity. Please use your keypad. If the answer is none, you're not connected to anybody over the course of a year, press two on your keypad, if that is one to 10 Cornellians. Press three on your keypad if it's 10 to 19 Cornellians and press four on your keypad if it's 20 or more. Then, you can even count, so 20 plus is four on your keypad, 10 to 19 is three on your keypad, one to 10 is two on your keypad and one would be none.

Mickey Munley: One on your keypad would be none, so sorry about that confusion. We'll get you the results here in a sec but lets hop right back into the questions. We have a lot of questions still, and again, star-three if you have a question for the president or dean. Right now, we're going to go to Brett, class of '14, who had a question about student-driven research. Brett, you are on live with the president and dean. Please go ahead with your question.

Brett: Hi. I got a lot of the Block program for skills training but I was wondering how the Block program currently facilitates student-driven research, how it might... how you might be considering ways to improve that if you want to. Lastly, what kinds of resources there are to get the young researches in contact or aware of different fellowship opportunities like the National Science Foundation Graduate Student Research Fellowship?

Joe Dieker: Sure, that's a great question and we have great answers for this one, because we've been involved in student faculty research for over 50 years. I don't know

if you were here, if you participated in that program, but that was especially in the sciences. About five years ago, we got a half million dollar Mellon grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to enhance our student faculty research and now we run a full-blown Cornell summer research institute, about 20 faculty members and about 30 to 40 students every summer doing research on our campus together.

Joe Dieker: Then, after that, we try to get students then to other research settings, big universities for another experience, especially those who want to go in the field like medicine or scientific research. We've also expanded research beyond the scientist and this research instituting involves the humanities and the social sciences. Research is strong and alive here. We have a number of faculty members who are nationally known researchers.

Joe Dieker: In fact, Marty Condon, a biologist, is right now on a million dollar NSF grant and is receiving international claim for that. It has been published in Science magazine. Rhawn Denniston, one of our geologists, again, a frequent National Science Foundation recipient. Research is alive and well at Cornell, part of that hands-on learning and we're trying to get more and more students involved.

Mickey Munley: Okay, great. Now, the results of that poll. Just really quickly, thank you for your answers. For a quarter of you, 25% said more than 20 or more than you can count Cornellians in the last year. Seventy-five or slightly less percent of you were in the middle of one to 10 or 10 to 19. There were a few of you who said just one and I think that just speaks to the great reach of Cornellians all across the world. Sometimes we live in a place where there's just not as many folks around.

Mickey Munley: I'm glad to have you all connected with this tonight though. Now, let's move on to questions to Lincoln, Nebraska. We're going to go to Elizabeth who has a question about student recruitment. Elizabeth, you're on live with the president and dean. Go ahead with your question, please.

Elizabeth: Thank you. I'd like to applaud you for your steps to address mental health on campus but you've spoken a bit about the minority population and I got a Cornell Report a while ago, and it had several members of minorities on the cover. I was speaking with a current student and said, "I was really excited that there were more minorities at Cornell," and she expressed to me that that wasn't really the case. I just wondered, has it risen? I went in '94 but is it current with today's population growth?

Jonathan Brand: Well, I think that it largely is. Thank you for this question, which I appreciate having and hearing. I think that it largely is with over one-fifth of our students being students of color. Again, I think one of the attributes of Cornell that we're very fortunate is that we have this reach that goes to 47 different states and Iowa is not even our largest state, and that national reach and international reach allows us to attract students of all backgrounds. At least based on the

numbers that I have seen, maybe we have... maybe our percentage of students of color has gone down a bit over the last at least 10 years.

Jonathan Brand: I think that number compared to other schools is actually a real success story, and we focus every year on ensuring that we're supporting our students. I mean, we have two full-time individuals who work in our intercultural life office and when I think about those elements of Cornell that are distinctive, it's actually the warmth of the community that I think undergirds the success that we've had in recruiting and matriculating, and retaining students, and including students of color and international students.

Mickey Munley: Okay, great. Thank you. Now, we're going to head down to Atlanta to John. John has a question about the fine arts. John, you're on live with the president and dean. Please go ahead with your question.

John: Thanks, President Brand and Dean Dieker. That was really great. I also want to say I'm so excited to hear about this mental health push. I struggled with my mental wellness when I was at Cornell in my junior year and I think that Ebersole Health Clinic saved my life. I don't think that's overstated anything. My real question though, I just wanted to say those first time caller and long-time listener, but tell us about the Master Fine Arts program.

John: I kind of heard rumblings about that on the campus. That seems like an exciting initiative for the college to head in, and so I'd love to hear your answer.

Joe Dieker: Sure, we're very excited about the Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing. This came out of a study about three years ago. We understand that Cornell, with all the pressures on higher education, we needed to expand beyond just that 18 to 22-year-old population. What would be the first graduate program that we just started? We did a study of this and found that a low residency Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing might be viable for us.

Joe Dieker: There's nothing like that within about a 300-mile range, and so we planned to launch this program in the summer of 2020. We're, in fact, we're having an accreditation review about the program here in just a couple of weeks. Essentially, our students come to our campus five times over two years for a residency. Then, during the intervening times, they're working with a professional writer on their own works. It's a common format.

Joe Dieker: It's called a low residency format for fine arts programs and writing, but this would be one of the more unique ones in the Midwest. We're excited about getting this started and there are just... we know that there's lots of people out there interested in this kind of a program, so that... we look forward for more information about this as we move forward towards that start in summer of 2020.

Mickey Munley: Okay, great. Thank you. We're going to head down to Norman, Oklahoma.

Transcript: Cornell College Phonecast from April 24th 2019

Roger: Yes, can you hear me?

Female: [inaudible 00:52:18]

Mickey Munley: Can you-

Female: All right.

Roger: What's going on?

Female: [inaudible 00:52:27]

Roger: Am I on?

Female: No.

Roger: What happened? Hello? I'm completely off.

Mickey Munley: Go ahead with your question.

Roger: Okay.

Mickey Munley: Hello? Yeah, you are good. Good, good, good. Thanks. Thank you.

Roger: Thanks. Thank you.

Mickey Munley: Roger, do you want to ask that question again?

Roger: Jonathan Yes, I will.

Brand: Roger: That would be great. Great to hear your voice.

Roger: Well, you had mentioned a little bit about Cornell's endowment and what you're doing, and that sounds good, but what I'm wondering is what... Cathy and I are wondering, is to what extent is Cornell College focusing on encouraging alumni to pay it forward like we have done in an endowed scholarship name for Kathryn Bohstedt Harrison. We have decided to do this now so we could see the impact on Cornell's College now.

Jonathan Brand: Am I to add that Cornell must... I didn't go to Cornell. Cathy did but Cornell must have many doctors, lawyers and other professionals. You are capable of doing this and it would be nice to see the endowment grow based on what the capabilities are of current Cornell alumni.

Roger, I think that All- Call should end right there without any response to that incredible question. I'm getting goose bumps just having heard that question from you. We are in the throes of our campaign right now, the Greater Than

campaign having completed the first part of the campaign, The Science Facilities project and either you all see the Russell Science Center if you haven't seen it yet. Now, we're on the second part, which is the endowment piece, recognizing that that can help students today and that can help students into the future.

Jonathan Brand: Again, as I mentioned earlier, those schools that will do well into the future will be those who have strong financial foundation and that starts with the endowment, and I'll add right now based on your question, it's going to be those schools that have alumni who are energized and motivated to be a part of that school after they graduate.

Mickey Munley: Okay. Taking the queue but also noticing the clock, President Brand, we've been on an hour and I know you really wanted to respect everybody's time. It was fortuitous and coincidental, but I think I know there are more people with questions and people can stay on the line and leave a voicemail if they have a comment or a question, but I know you really wanted to respect their time. Maybe at the top of the hour, you'd have a couple of final comments, and then, we'd be good.

Jonathan Brand: Great. Well, I have to say over the course of this last hour, for both the dean and for me, hearing your questions, hearing the energy behind your questions, it is so motivating. I'm ready to sort of get off this phone call and get right back to work tonight. That was just so awesome. Thank you for your comments and your questions.

Jonathan Brand: It's really helpful and we just love hearing from you. We both, on behalf of the dean, I also want to thank you for participating, taking the time on a busy evening, you know, it's thought-provoking and it's been a real pleasure to have this time with you this evening. We'll look forward to seeing you on the hilltop or in your neck of the woods in the near future. Thank you very much, everyone. You take care.