

MS. LINDA COPMAN

Unendorsed candidate; petitioned to be on ballot



“The future of Cornell hinges on our ability to make balanced decisions which advance the university’s academic mission, while at the same time meeting the needs of the people we serve and supporting a sustainable planet.”

Cornell Degree: AB, Anthropology and German Area Studies, Cornell University, 1983, Phi Beta Kappa

Other Education: MFA, Creative Writing, University of British Columbia, 1987

Please describe the reasons why you hope to serve on the board, the strengths you would bring to the position and the ways in which you are uniquely suited to contribute to Cornell’s success.

The trustees’ overriding responsibility is to maintain a forum for analysis and debate as we work to make the best possible decisions for the future of Cornell. I believe there are opportunities to find agreement by engaging in honest and balanced dialogue with the thought leaders who are members of our own community. Now is the time for listening, learning, and working together to find solutions to the challenges we face. My goal as a trustee is to participate in these important conversations and in shared governance of our collective future.

As a legislative assistant in Hawaii, I worked to find evidence-based solutions and translate them into effective policies. At Cornell, I’ve worked with colleagues across campus to advance the university’s climate action plan. I know how to establish realistic targets, work strategically to make progress, respectfully engage diverse stakeholders, and build consensus. In short, I’m a proven problem-solver.

Cornell will welcome the university’s 14th president, Martha E. Pollack, as trustee elections are underway. What do you believe are the three most important issues the president will face during her first year? How can you assist her in addressing Cornell’s distinctive challenges as well as broad issues in higher education that impact Cornell?

As an alumna, Cornell employee, parent of a Cornell sophomore, and resident of Ithaca, I have a real stake in Cornell’s future. From my unique vantage point in Day Hall, I see Cornell’s near-term challenges as:

- **Infrastructure:** *accommodating growth and updating infrastructure*
To maintain the quality of the Cornell experience, we must work with surrounding communities to address housing, transportation, public safety, ecological, and economic issues.
- **Sustainability:** *satisfying campus energy needs through renewable sources and serving as a model for others*
As we come to understand the urgency for climate action in light of recent scientific findings, we need to accelerate our response to adjust to this emerging information.
- **Unity:** *bringing diverse minds and hearts together to benefit present and future generations*
We must agree to make changes in the way we do business to ensure a thriving, resilient, and sustainable future for Cornell, New York State, and our world.

In 2017 Cornell will dedicate its new Tech campus on Roosevelt Island. Together with the Ithaca campus and Weill Cornell Medicine, the three campuses will comprise “One Cornell.” In your view how does the concept advance our university’s future?

What challenges do you foresee?

With an expanding presence in NYC, Cornell is well positioned to bridge the divide between upstate and downstate. If we succeed, benefits will

flow in both directions—opening new opportunities for students and faculty in both NYC and Ithaca.

Recent cross-campus collaborations include initiatives to better understand and treat cancer, improve healthcare in rural communities, and enable disabled youth to successfully enter the workforce. As Cornell’s first net-zero energy building rises in NYC, we are creating a model for others to emulate. If the Ithaca campus can successfully harness geothermal energy to heat our buildings, Cornell will be at the forefront of a solution that has the potential to transform our energy landscape.

The vision of “One Cornell” is to connect all our schools and campuses as we pursue our public mission. To realize this vision, we will need to investigate better transportation and housing options to serve inter-campus travelers.

Professional Experience:

- Staff Writer, Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs, Cornell University July 2014–present
- Communications Specialist (part-time), Critical Zone Observatory National Office, 2014–2015
- Climate Action Plan Coordinator, Energy & Sustainability Department, Cornell University, 2013–2014
- Communications Consultant, EcoVillage at Ithaca–Center for Sustainability Education, 2012–2014
- Program Coordinator, Diversity Programs in Engineering Office, Cornell University, 2012–2013
- Staff Writer and Program Manager, The Kohala Center, 2005–2012
- Legislative Assistant, Hawaii County Council, 2005–2009
- Communications Consultant, W. M. Keck Observatory, 2006–2008

Alumni Service:

- Cornell Club of Ithaca, Member
- Cornell Club of Hawaii, Former Member

Community/Public Service:

- Appointed as Employee Representative to the 2016–2017 Cornell University Assembly, where she sponsored successful resolutions endorsing two important policy documents: “Options for Achieving a Carbon Neutral Campus by 2035” and “The Ithaca Plan: A Public Health and Safety Approach to Drugs and Drug Policy.” These resolutions ask Cornell’s senior leadership to support the recommendations put forth in the reports and to provide annual progress updates on their implementation to the University Assembly.
- Served on the 2015 Tompkins County Energy Roadmap Steering Committee and assisted with preparation of a county plan to achieve an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- Drafted and advocated for successful passage of far-reaching legislation in Hawaii County, including zoning code reforms, an island-wide plastic bag ban, and several renewable energy initiatives.

Student involvements/activities:

Resident Advisor, Sperry Hall; Cornell Outdoor Education Instructor, Canoeing

Additional Information:

My three children were born and raised in Hawaii, where we learned about the Hawaiian concept of having a “pono,” or balanced relationship with the land, our community, and ourselves. This concept seems especially relevant today, as we consider how to balance work life with family life, sustainability with economic growth, and domestic priorities with global challenges. I am deeply committed to this concept of finding balance—in the places we work, go to school, and live. For many years, I have welcomed visitors from around the world to my home. My family has hosted international students from India, China, Australia, Europe, and Africa, many of whom have become very dear to us. As we have opened our home to strangers, we find that they soon become friends. I look forward to sharing this spirit of aloha with members of the Cornell community and with the Board of Trustees if I am elected.