

# MR. KENT G. SHENG

Endorsed by the Committee on Alumni Trustee Nominations



*"I believe the board must maintain and improve transparency in its decision-making process with respect to all Cornell stakeholders—students, alumni, faculty, parents, the individual college units, and administrators, both existing and incoming—when contemplating strategic decisions about the physical campus, curricular alignment, and funding priorities."*

**Cornell Degree:** AB A&S 1978, Government

**Other Education:** MPP, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1985; Chartered Financial Analyst designation, 1993

**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.**

*To the board I would bring energy, a seasoned respect for Cornell's great traditions, and valuable insight into Cornell's great initiatives around diversity, interdisciplinary studies, and student well-being. As a roll-up-your-sleeves, active alum, my focus has been on ways to improve the life, curricular, and pre-career decisions students make during their time on campus. Collaborating with Alumni Affairs and Development, I sponsored a video about living-learning improvements brought by the new West Campus House System. Chairing the Student and Academic Services Major Gifts Committee, I worked alongside fellow alumni to organize the "Thanks, Susan" campaign raising funds for the new University Health Services building expansion. A long-time advocate for the Asian and Asian American Center, I initiated the A3C Graduate Student Mentors program in 2013. Additionally, co-founding the Cornell Asian Alumni Association in 1990 and actively engaging as a senior advisor has deepened my understanding of how alumni affinity groups can foster goodwill and annual scholarship support for Cornell. I am optimistic about the sustaining changes underway in Cornell's Greek system.*

**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?**

*Coming to Cornell somewhat at midstream, President Pollack will be called upon to manage major initiatives already set in motion. The Master Housing Plan, the coalescence of the Cornell SC Johnson College of Business, Cornell-Tech implementation, possible curricular changes, and faculty renewal come to mind. She will need to recommend financial measures that support and, perhaps, prioritize these initiatives without compromising educational quality and financial aid.*

*Yet, the foremost first-year challenge will be for President Pollack to get to know people—the Cornell stakeholders. She must access and assess their advice. In this way, I see the board as both a resource and a strategic guiding post for the president. Likely, President Pollack will need to define her own vision of Cornell's mission in several areas, including any debate about the liberal arts curriculum, and also the balance between safe spaces and forums for free expression.*

**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?**

*As Cornell affords better educational opportunities for its students, so will Cornell's own future advance. Industrial Revolution-driven social*

*and economic shifts gave purpose to Cornell's land-grant mission to prepare students in "modern approaches" in agricultural and mechanical sciences. Equally, 21st-century technologies now reshaping business, medicine, and our economy make the initiatives at Weill Cornell Medicine and Cornell Tech compelling. Entrepreneurial training and proximity to centers of technical knowledge and real life practitioners are competitive advantages. I think "One Cornell" is really tied to our shared desire to look at all the ways we can make Cornell number "one."*

*The challenge? Make the lessons of its New York City programs play in Ithaca as well. Cornell needs to meld the best of its applied learning pedagogy with its liberal arts mandate at the undergraduate level. This includes crafting carefully and imaginatively further initiatives in interdisciplinary programs and introductory courses.*

## Professional Experience:

- Chief Investment Officer, Tandem Capital Management, Inc., Woodcliff Lake, NJ, 1990–present
- Dean Witter Reynolds, Inc., New York, Investment Advisor, 1985–1989
- Brightwork Brand Holdings, New York, board member, 2012–2016

## Alumni Service:

- Frank H. T. Rhodes Exemplary Alumni Service Award–2014
- Student and Campus Life Advisory Council (Member 2015–present)
- Cornell University Council (CUC) Life Member–2016
- Cornell Asian Alumni Association (CAAA) (Co-founder, 1990; Senior Advisor, 2008–present; Reunion Co-Chair, Banquet Co-Chair, Nominating Committee Chair)
- Class of 1978 Class Council (Member 2009–2018)
- Program support: Faculty Renewal Sesquicentennial Fellow in Economics
- Program support: China and Asia-Pacific Studies at Cornell (CAPS)

## Prior:

- Asian and Asian American Center (A3C) Graduation Ceremony speaker, May 2014 and May 2016
- Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network (CAAAN) Member
- Class of 1978 Constitution & Bylaws Committee (Chair 2015–2016)
- CUC Member (2008–2012, 2014–2015)
- Group leader for the 2012 dedication of the Paul D. Bonner '78 Group Study Room, a joint gift to Uris Library from the Officers of the Class of 1978 and Officers of CAAA
- Student and Academic Services Advisory Council (Member 2008–2012; Vice Chair–2012)
- Student and Academic Services Major Gifts Committee (Chair–2013–2015)
- Supporter: Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation; College Mentors for Kids–Cornell chapter

## Community/Public Service:

- CFA Institute (Member)
- NY Society of Security Analysts (Member)
- Tarrytown Music Hall (Treasurer 2016, Chair of Finance Committee 2014–2016, Chair of Audit Committee 2016, Board Member 2010–2016)

## Student involvements/activities:

As an undergraduate, Kent was president of the Chinese Students Association, a reporter for the Cornell Daily Sun, Assistant Treasurer and a member of Sigma Pi fraternity, and a member of the Asian American Coalition.

## Additional information:

Hobbies—enjoy swimming and competitive volleyball.