



Focus on Cornell University

Part Ivy League private school, part state university of New York, Cornell provides unusually extensive opportunities for approximately 15,000 undergraduate and 8,000 graduate students. More than 4,000 courses are available to undergraduates in over 100 academic departments housed across 7 colleges. Yet, despite the university's size, 76% of the undergraduate classes have fewer than 30 students. Furthermore, academic and peer advising are strong, and the faculty, most of whom live in Ithaca and are visible everywhere on campus, generally get to know their students well.

Founded in 1868, it was the first college in the country to admit African-American students and one of the first to admit women. Proud of its egalitarian tradition as well as its elite education, Cornell is committed to maintaining a diverse community and encouraging inquiry and cross-fertilization of ideas through multi-disciplinary study. Although undergraduates apply directly to a specific college and applications are read by college rather than by the applicant's region, admissions officers explain that students "enroll in one, study in all" because everyone takes courses outside of their college.

Prospective applicants are advised to search the "Majors" page on the university's website in order to determine which college they should apply to. What they discover will sometimes surprise them. For instance, although the College of Arts

and Sciences houses half of the majors, the Communications major is housed in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

The SC Johnson School of Business has two divisions, the School of Hotel Management (which has been ranked as the top such school in the world) and the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, which prepares students for careers in fields ranging from banking and finance to management and consulting in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

The College of Engineering offers 14 majors, but students need not declare one until their second semester.

The College of Human Ecology, which is explained as “all about solving problems,” offers a highly diverse set of majors that includes Design & Environmental Analysis; Fashion Design & Management; Fiber Science; Human Biology, Health & Society; Nutritional Sciences; and Policy Analysis & Management.

Finally, the College of Industrial and Labor Relations offers one interdisciplinary major that prepares students for careers in law, politics and any number of other fields through studies in Business, Economics, Government, History, International Relations, Labor Relations, Law, Public Policy, and Social Justice.

To make matters even more complicated, some very similar majors are offered in more than one division, but with a slightly different emphasis. Some divisions are more competitive to get into than others, and sometimes applicants' choice of division is based on finances, since the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Human Ecology, Industrial and Labor Relations, and the Dyson School of AEM provide state university tuition for residents of New York State. (Hotel Management, although it is housed in business school along with Dyson, is not a part of the state university system.) While these land-grant colleges get more applications from within New York than out-of-state, no preference is given them in the admissions process.

Much research occurs in all disciplines across Cornell University, and, most of the positions working alongside professors are held by undergraduates, some of them starting as early as freshman year, since undergraduates outnumber graduate students two-to-one.

As for what's new at Cornell, a recent donation of \$150million has spurred expanded work in business and computer science, while work in environmental science and sustainability is growing, and the university's current research in crypto-currency is the most prominent in the nation, producing virtually all the information we learn about in the news.

There was a time when Cornell had a reputation for being a pressure-cooker, and a suicide cluster in 2006 made the news. However, the current suicide rate is below

average, and students report that the atmosphere is more often collaborative than cutthroat. Mental health counseling services have expanded tremendously in recent years and include a large student club that brings students together with peers for discussion and support.

The campus is beautiful and safe, and although winters are cold and long, students walk everywhere and enjoy utilizing Cayuga Lake and the surrounding trails for outdoor recreation. Athletic teams attract lots of fans, and non-varsity athletes enjoy a particularly large intramural league. Approximately one-third of Cornell's students join fraternities or sororities, but rushing is not allowed until the winter to ensure that freshmen have a chance to settle in first. While Greek life is prominent on campus, there is no pressure to participate and plenty to do without it, given the more than 1200 student clubs and organizations and the fact that the small city of Ithaca has many festivals and more restaurants than Manhattan.

Housing is guaranteed for freshmen and sophomores, and those who wish to stay in university housing for their remaining years are usually able to do so. Freshmen are all housed together on North Campus, where they may be in singles, doubles, triples or quads in a variety of types of residence halls including some with themes. Also on the North Campus are three dining halls, a tutoring center and a gym.

Admission is highly selective, with 51,000 applications for the 3,275 spots in the class of 2022. Students are evaluated holistically to determine fit, so some factors matter for some schools more than others. For example, to be considered for Engineering, applicants must have taken A.P. Calculus BC in high school, but "if they are fantastic in math and that's what they're coming in for, it may not matter if they are a bit weaker in English." Admissions officers don't look at the applicants' GPA, but rather at the rigor of their curriculum and their performance in the most challenging classes their high school offers in disciplines related to their intended program of study.

The only demonstration of interest recognized by the admission office is the binding Early Decision application, and Cornell enrolls approximately one-third of the class, including all the recruited athletes, from that cohort. A small number of students are admitted to begin in the spring semester, and indicating on the application a willingness to enter in the spring gives a slight boost to one's chance of being admitted. Students who are admitted to begin in the spring may go elsewhere for the first semester and transfer their credits.

Although numbers may differ for the different colleges, overall for the class of 2022, the median SAT scores were 680-750 for English and 710-790 for Math, and the median ACT composite scores were 32-34.