

EZRA

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY'S
MAGAZINE
EXTRA

This special section, a bonus issue of the university's Ezra magazine, highlights ways Cornell initiatives intersect with philanthropy and engagement of Cornell alumni, parents and friends.

CORNELL'S REVAMPED EXTERNAL EDUCATION UNIT BROADENS ITS REACH

Paul Krause '91 is the university's vice provost for external education and leads eCornell. His role as vice provost is part of an effort that recently brought together eCornell and the university's various external education programs into a new external education initiative unit under the academic leadership of the provost's office to expand Cornell's reach and impact.

The new unit also supports faculty who develop and design learning experiences to strategically extend the reach of the university. The initiative also includes expanding executive education programs tailored to the needs of companies, governments and nonprofits.

The full conversation is available at news.cornell.edu/PaulKrauseQA.

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“WE DO NOT FOCUS PRIMARILY ON TRADITIONAL COLLEGE-AGE STUDENTS, BUT RATHER WORKING PROFESSIONALS AND LIFELONG LEARNERS.”

– Paul Krause '91

What are Cornell's external education goals?

Paul Krause: President Martha E. Pollack and Provost Michael I. Kotlikoff have a vision to expand Cornell's reach and impact through external education offerings. They've brought together eCornell and other external education units under the provost's office as part of an effort to better integrate and expand our efforts.

In practical terms, we expand our reach and impact by launching new educational programs that people will enroll in. We work with Cornell faculty to design and produce these learning programs and events that may be online, in person or live, or in a blend of formats.

Of course, we also need to make sure that the world knows about Cornell's programs and their unique value. So we have a number of goals related to driving enrollment. We do not focus primarily on traditional college-age students, but rather working professionals and lifelong learners. We have goals for both reaching individual students and for establishing long-term relationships with nonprofit organizations and industry partners to integrate Cornell programs into their employee development plans.

What are some of the programs this unit offers, and how many people does it reach?

eCornell is well known for its online certificate programs, which are considered noncredit microcredentials. Cornell was a pioneer with this type of online program, launching a significant initiative more than 20 years ago. Over the past couple of years, Cornell has really expanded its offerings further, and today we are a leader among our peers for these small-cohort, high-impact online programs.

We offer more than 80 programs that are typically completed in a 3- to 6-month period. We expect more than 80,000 unique students this year. These programs often support learners who wish to develop their professional skills in topics ranging from business and leadership to hospitality, human resources,

healthcare, marketing and technology. We also offer successful programs on lifelong learning topics such as photography and nutrition.

Our team also collaborates closely with multiple academic units to launch new online and blended master's degree programs that target working professionals. These have been quite successful in terms of enrolling impressive cohorts of individuals, offering high-quality programming, and garnering great overall feedback.

The next program we are launching, this month, is an online master of science in legal studies [MSLS] through Cornell Law School. It is a degree for working business professionals who work with lawyers and need a solid grounding in legal language and concepts. We intend to launch many more online and blended master's programs for working professionals.

Of course, education also can happen in very small bites. To support this type of learning, Cornell offers something we call interactive keynotes. Keynotes are bite-sized, one-hour, engaging live events such as panels or interviews. These provide an opportunity for people to hear from faculty on current events and recent research, or just to engage in a topic they find interesting. In one recent week we held keynote events ranging from "Guiding our Children through Crisis" and "Racism in America" to "Innovations for COVID-safe Hotels."

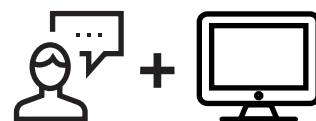
What are some of the most popular offerings, and what partnerships have enhanced them?

In the category of professional online certificate programs, one of our top program areas is diversity and inclusion, which is certainly relevant in the national discussion right now. Other popular programs include leadership, digital marketing, project management and women in leadership.

One of our biggest social-impact partnerships is with Bank of America. The Bank of America Institute for Women's Entrepreneurship at

100+

online professional certificates and lifelong learning programs available through eCornell, designed by Cornell faculty



Through external education, Cornell delivers a broad range of courses and learning programs to individuals and organizations across the world through online, in-person and blended formats.

Cornell offers a free women entrepreneurs certificate that is a high-impact, robust online program for aspiring entrepreneurs. They recently announced plans to more than double its total enrollment, adding 30,000 slots with an emphasis on diversity.

What has been the impact of the recent organizational changes?

While the changes are all still a work in progress, this new structure has already enabled Cornell to build a more comprehensive, strategic approach to external education. For example, now when we meet with a Fortune 500 company, we have a more integrated message on how Cornell can support their internal employee development initiatives. In a recent example, a large organization was looking for support in diversity and inclusion, and we were able to assemble a broad, multipart solution that included live executive education, online certificate courses, and learning paths with on-demand lesson videos. This unique set of capabilities really does resonate – the idea that we can provide solutions to multiple levels of an organization. This might include live faculty interaction for the executive-level managers within a company, online certificate programs for targeted “high potential” managers and on-demand lessons that are scalable and can be pushed out to more than 20,000 employees.

For the university community, being structured in this way means we are better able to align programs and facilitate collaboration among faculty to expand the number of programs and events offered.

Have you built relationships with other institutional partners?

We’re looking to launch additional social-impact programs. For example, just this year, Steve Carvell, professor of finance, facilitated a pilot collaboration between various units at Cornell and the National Education Equity Lab, a nonprofit organization, and the potential impacts are very exciting. It’s a way to give high school students in underserved communities the opportunity to develop critical business skills while excelling in, and ultimately completing, a for-credit course at a top university like Cornell.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Cornell’s external education initiative?

As with everyone, the coronavirus pandemic has had profound impacts on us. While we played a relatively minor role, we did mobilize our resources required to support Cornell’s all-hands-on-deck effort to get classes online last spring. We also have accelerated opportunities

to reuse eCornell-produced online learning assets in any course that needs them.

With respect to the external education efforts, traditional in-person executive education had a fairly abrupt pause, and our focus has been to migrate these programs online where possible. As you might expect, certain market segments, such as hospitality, have really been hit hard. Beyond these challenges, the pandemic has only accelerated interest in online programs and we’ve seen significant enrollment growth.

What qualities do you and your team bring to this external education unit?

I’m fortunate to have a very strong team with a lot of complementary skill sets and many years of collective experience in this space. We have great instructional design professionals, media production professionals, digital marketing



experts, professional enrollment counselors, learning consultants, partnership account managers, operations experts, and so much more. Our team is passionate about creating great programs and sharing their enthusiasm about them with the world. And, importantly, we have the support of amazing Cornell faculty – an indispensable part of this entire initiative.

What really drives all of us is being able to deliver a growing and renowned program that reflects well on Cornell University and that has a real and lasting impact on people’s lives – a crucial part of Cornell’s mission and “any person ... any study” ethos.

Above: A screenshot of one of eCornell’s online program offerings.

The gift of clean air: Cornellian donates air purifiers

By Kaitlin Provost



Provided

Above: Phil Yuen '00 pictured with one of Aurabeat's standalone air purifiers.

When Phil Yuen '00 heard Cornell was reopening for in-person learning last fall, he saw an opportunity to partner with the university to help make campus safer. His company, Aurabeat Technology in Hong Kong, has developed an air filtration system that can eliminate 99.9% of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from the air indoors.

"I saw on the news that Cornell was one of the few schools deciding to let folks back on campus and do in-person lessons," Yuen says. "And I thought, let's find a way to get our product out there and help."

It wasn't an easy task. Aurabeat was certified to operate in the United States, but hadn't yet begun production. Yuen scrambled to get the right materials to manufacture the air purifiers for Cornell as students began arriving on campus.

His hard work, including jumping through a lot of logistical and production hoops, paid off. Yuen was able to manufacture and donate 30 units to the Statler Hotel, which has been used to house students in isolation because of COVID-19.

Demand for products like Aurabeat's filters has skyrocketed because of their role in fighting COVID-19 transmission. Yuen is glad he was able to fast-track production to bring the filters to Cornell students in time for the start of in-person classes. "I'm really glad it helped," he says. "I'm glad it's helping students go back."

Yuen also hopes his gift inspires other alumni to do what they can to support Cornell during the pandemic, whatever that might mean for them.

"I thought it would be pretty amazing if I could play a small part in this, and if everybody banded together," Yuen says. "Sometimes it's not the easiest path, but you can still do a lot of good in the end."

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