

Ladies and Gents of the Class of '65,

It's never too early to start thinking about Reunion. A long weekend on campus, enjoying each other and the best weather Ithaca has to offer, engaging our minds and spirit through a myriad of first-rate programs, dancing in the tents, eating as much Dairy Bar ice cream as we want. What could be better?

In June 2025, it will have been ten years since our last on-campus Reunion and the Class Council is already working hard to make it memorable. The Class of '65, the centennial class, has in previous years made a gift to Cornell a part of our Reunion. Our gift in conjunction with the 50th Reunion was a beautiful wrought-iron arch which graces the garden of the Andrew Dickson White House. It's a peaceful place to hang out amidst the hustle and bustle and turmoil of campus.

Last summer, I sent an email informing you that the Class of '65 had formed a committee to consider making a major gift to Cornell in conjunction with our upcoming 60th Reunion. Our Gift Committee wants our class gift to provide us with a collective opportunity to thank Cornell for its contribution to us.

Our committee decided that we should create a fund to support the efforts of the Skorton Center for Health Initiatives to address the emotional well-being of present and future students. When we were students, we acquired the knowledge and thought processes that formed the foundation of our lives as adults. It was not easy, however, to find university support for any of the psychological stress we were feeling. Now the Skorton Center has formed a unit to address student mental health issues. Mental health concerns are rising among college students nationally, and Cornell is no exception. Fully a quarter of Cornell students indicated an inability to function for some time due to depression, stress, or anxiety. Counseling centers on campus are struggling to meet demand. In partnership with the university and the Skorton Center, we have formed the Class of 1965 Student Mental Health Fund as a Legacy Gift, which would support the initiatives of the Skorton Center.

During the past year, we have evaluated the Cornell team developing student well-being programs, and we believe that Cornell has assembled a first-class group. We have also helped finance a pilot program to provide coaching from specially trained Cornell staff for students facing stress. The results indicate that the pilot, which began in the 2023 Fall semester and focuses on resilience, has seen extremely positive results. We will contact you again soon with specific results of the pilot, the Skorton Center's plans going forward, and guidance for making donations to the Class of 1965 Student Mental Health Fund.

It is now time for the Committee to go public with its efforts and to soon start soliciting gifts to the Class of 1965 Student Mental Health Fund. By the end of 2023, we had already raised \$97,750 in donations, and we have set a target to raise \$250,000 by the end of our Reunion. We believe we can beat this target.

We will henceforth refer to this initiative as a Legacy Gift. Cornell's policy, set by the Board of Trustees, only allows gifts made during our Reunion year (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) to count toward our official Reunion campaign totals; however, the good news is that ALL gifts made to the fund, before and after as well as during our Reunion year, will count toward our Legacy Gift.

Best wishes to all for a Happy New Year 2024.

Jamil Sopher