How does Cornell’s unique status as both an elite Ivy and a land-grant institution position it to do good in the world? How can the trustees and alumni support Cornell’s mission to do the greatest good?

A phrase associated with our status as a research university within the Ivy League anchored with an egalitarian founding is that Cornell is “elite without being elitist.” Cornell is unique in combining liberal arts subjects such as literature, classics, history, and economics in innovative ways with other areas of study such as urban planning, agricultural engineering, and policy analysis. It is difficult to think of another university so integrated into the local community and geographic region in the way that Cornell has been for decades, with the Cornell Cooperative Extension as just one example of a successful program woven into the fabric of every county in New York State. Trustees and alumni contribute to these global solutions through contributions of expertise, strategic planning, and financial support. By highlighting key areas for development and funding, trustees set an example for alumni to provide further support and talent for successful programs.

How do you envision the Board of Trustees supporting Cornell’s founding principle of “… any person … any study?” How does this relate to Cornell’s priority to strengthen and broaden diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the university?

The founding principle “… any person … any study” seems simple to enact just by offering a variety of courses and making education as broadly available to as many people as possible. However, this statement challenges us to think about how we go about making a Cornell education accessible to all. Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives must be more than words on paper or a superficial set of actions that do not result in real change. These initiatives are certainly not easy, coupled with uncomfortable conversations and honest appraisals of systems and institutions that exist today through the actions of prior generations. The Board of Trustees demonstrates its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by enacting forward-thinking policies that ensure access to a Cornell education to all through generous financial aid, recruiting diverse faculty through ongoing renewal efforts, sponsoring research focused on these areas, and partnering with experts around the globe to enact meaningful change.

Why do you hope to serve on the board and how are you uniquely suited to contribute to Cornell’s success?

Serving as a trustee would allow me to give back to an institution that has contributed enormously to my personal growth and professional development. Mentoring Cornell students has allowed me to guide future healthcare professionals during a critical time in their education and allows me to introduce them to the lifelong alumni community they join upon graduation. I have been a dedicated Cornell volunteer for over 20 years, including service as a mentor for alumni classes through efforts on the board of the Cornell Association of Class Officers. Most recently, I served as chair of Cornell University Council, providing leadership for the development of the Cornell Advocacy Program, partnering with key staff in the Division of University Relations and Government Relations along with Alumni Affairs and Development. As a faculty physician with training in public health, I bring my professional expertise for medical campus operations and university-wide efforts during a global pandemic.