

John W. Rawlins, III

Cornell degree: BS '06 (HumEc)



*Amid culture shifts in higher education, the board must address how the university will continue to recruit, attract, and retain one of our greatest assets: our faculty and staff. Their work actualizes our mission, and we must make sure their experience is as world-class as our beloved alma mater.*

**How can trustees and alumni best support the university's mission to do the greatest good for Cornell students, and in the world?**

*For alumni and the board to do the greatest good, we must be present, we must continue to be connected, and we must be on the pulse of not only innovation, but how we can improve the human condition. One thing I love about being a Cornellian is the way that we bring positive change to our campuses and to the world. Part of that is simply showing up and being present. We are also not afraid to use our resources (time, finances, connections, etc.) to be the change we desire to see. I have never lived anywhere where I did not see a Cornell affiliation or connection at play. Our reach is both local and global, in and out of the classroom. I believe that we have the answers and that we are the answer.*

**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 first step is for us to remember that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) should be woven into the fabric of the institution and not just with certain titles, job descriptions, or with those who hold certain identities. The board and the university should not only reflect our global community, but every individual must be able to have an affirming and validating experience that does not limit or minimize their presence or contributions to the greater landscape of Cornell. We must engage both intellectually and with great humanity to understand the various perspectives represented in our community. We should be willing to listen and learn from these experiences to make us stronger, better equipped to lead in an ever-changing society, and to further our lasting dedication to "... any person ... any study."*

**Why do you hope to serve on the board? How will you contribute to Cornell's success?**

*Since graduating from Cornell, I have made it a priority to give back to the institution that changed my life. I'm committed to doing all I can to ensure that Cornell is a life-changing experience for generations of future breakthrough researchers, thought leaders, and change agents. I believe that my work, leadership, and experience in higher education (at both private and public R1 institutions) provides me with insight and knowledge that will add to the board and the institution's wealth of knowledge. I also hope to continue my work to inspire alumni to give to Cornell in ways that make sense for them. My alumni volunteer involvement, especially with the Cornell Black Alumni Association (CBAA), has helped to bring some fresh faces and perspectives to the table, and I hope to build on this legacy within a new scope.*

#### Professional experience:

- University of California San Diego, Campus Diversity Officer and Director, Black Resource Center, 2022–present
- California State University San Marcos, Director, Black Student Center, 2019–2022; Special Assistant to the Chief Diversity Officer, 2020–2022; Interim Director, Gender Equity Center, 2019–2020
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Corporate Headquarters, Director for Leadership Development and Training, 2017–2019
- Johns Hopkins University, Assistant Director, Leadership Development/Multicultural Affairs, 2016–2017; Special Assistant to the Dean of Student Life, 2014–2016
- Ithaca College, Assistant Director for Multicultural Affairs, 2006–2014

#### Alumni service:

- Cornell University Council, member at large, 2022–present, 2016–2020
- College of Human Ecology Advisory Council, member, 2021–present
- Cornell Mosaic, member at large, 2021–present
- Fresh from the Hill, podcast host, 2020–2021
- Facilitator, Communicating Across Differences, Cornell Alumni Leadership Conference, 2020
- Cornell Black Alumni Association, President, 2021–present, 2018–2021; Vice President of Programming, 2016–2018; Reunion chair, 2017–2018; Reunion committee member, 2014–2015; member, 2011–present
- Class of 2006, Affinity chair, 2016–present
- Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network, member, 2013–2014

#### Community/public service/philanthropic priorities:

- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., life member
- Bayview Church of San Diego
- Bryant Educational Leadership Group Advisory Board
- NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

#### Other education:

- Master of Arts in Communications, Johns Hopkins University, 2018

#### Student involvements/activities:

- Association for Students of Color, Human Ecology
- Black Student Union, co-chair
- Campus Life Student Advisory Committee
- Chosen Generation Gospel Choir, co-founder
- Cornell Tradition Fellowships
- How Excellent Gospel Choir
- Men of Color Council, co-founder
- Quill and Dagger Senior Honor Society
- Pamoja-Ni Gospel Choir
- Resident Advisor, Ujamaa Residential College

#### Additional information:

I am a diversity, equity, and inclusion/student affairs practitioner and leader with 16 years of experience as an administrator and advocate for all students, faculty, and staff. I have expertise working with those from marginalized backgrounds; I believe that institutions must be able to hold space for the voice and visibility of all experiences in the community. I am a D.C.-area native currently residing in Southern California. I am also a gospel recording artist and vocalist who has performed on national and international stages with artists such as jazz icon Wynton Marsalis and gospel legend Kirk Franklin.