

John R. Toohey-Morales

Cornell degree: BS '84 (CALS)



With the university admissions landscape likely to be dramatically altered by the U.S. Supreme Court this year, Cornell University's Board of Trustees and leadership must shoulder the responsibility of protecting our alma mater's steadfast tenet of "... any person ... any study"—an achievable goal if approached creatively and vigorously.

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

Doing the greatest collective good starts with each one of us as individual Cornellians. Ezra Cornell knew that educating one student would reverberate across generations. That's why it is so important for Cornell's trustees and alumni to promote a welcoming environment for new and continuing students that allows them to thrive while on the Hill, and eventually leverage their experiences into doing good out in the world. I recently reflected on my mother's wish for me—to become a man of good—and I thought back to the transforming capacity of my Cornell experience. Becoming a Cornellian led to a series of personal choices and a career track that together had a ripple effect across my community and beyond. It's a Cornell story repeated thousands of times, each bearing fruit in the form of a positive societal impact—the greatest good.

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 era of big data could not have come at a better time given how the university admissions landscape is likely to change. If "... any person ... any study" is to be energetically protected and fostered, the Board of Trustees will need to encourage innovative methods of data analysis. These applied demographic techniques would allow the admissions office to continue identifying the best students at every level, including those coming from lower and middle-income households. We all know the impact that a Cornell education has had on our own lives. Ensuring that our new graduates come from varied backgrounds by protecting and widening our alma mater's efforts to broaden diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)—even in the face of headwinds—will allow us to spread the "greatest good" far and wide.

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

Being a proud product of a Puerto Rican mother and an Irish American father, I believe that I am uniquely positioned to be a voice for diversity and inclusion as a Cornell trustee. My upbringing didn't just expose me to multiple cultures and languages, but also to challenges: from being a latchkey kid to using understanding and compassion to help my distant father through a crippling illness. Today's Cornell students, faculty, and alumni can rise up to take on some of our biggest problems like inequality, climate change, and public health in a very unique way thanks to Cornell's biggest virtue—"... any person ... any study." I want to protect and foster diversity in backgrounds and ideas that allows Cornellians to collaborate across boundaries in ways others can't.

Professional experience:

- Founder and Lead Certified Consulting Meteorologist, ClimaData Corporation, 1991–present
- Columnist, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2020–present
- Chief Meteorologist, WTVJ, 2009–2022; WSCV, 2003–2008; WLTV, 1991–2002
- Adjunct Professor (meteorology), St. Thomas University, Miami Gardens, FL, 2005–2012
- Meteorologist, NOAA/National Weather Service (NWS), 1984–1991

Alumni service:

- Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) Outstanding Alumni Award recipient, 2022
- CALS Advisory Council, member, 2021–present
- Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability Advisory Council, member, 2019–present
- Cornell Class of 1984, president, 2019–present; Class Council, Development Committee member, 2014–2019
- Cornell University Council, member, 2021–present, 2015–2019
- Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network, member, 2013–present; committee chair, 2016
- Cornell Club of Greater Miami and the Florida Keys, member, 1992–present

Community/public service/philanthropic priorities:

- CLEO Institute (nonprofit), Vice President, Board of Directors, 2015–present
- Open Door Health Center (nonprofit), member, Board of Directors, 2010–present
- AMS Henry T. Harrison Award for Outstanding Contributions by a Consulting Meteorologist, 2022
- Best Buddies International (nonprofit), nominated as Orlando Champion, 2022
- National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Suncoast Chapter Silver Circle Inductee, 2018
- National Tropical Weather Conference John Coleman Broadcast Award, 2018
- Emmy Awards (Suncoast Chapter 4), 1993, 2006, 2010, 2018
- NOAA Science Advisory Board, member, Environmental Information Working Group, 2009–2015
- Fellow of the AMS, elected 2008
- AMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Advance of Applied Meteorology, 2007
- U.S. Delegation to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), private sector advisor, 2005
- American Meteorological Society (AMS) Award for Broadcast Meteorology, 2004
- National Weather Association Broadcaster of the Year Award, 2003
- U.S. Department of Commerce Silver Medal, NWS San Juan, Hurricane Hugo, 1989

Other education:

- Master of Science, Johns Hopkins University, 2021

Student involvements/activities:

- Cornell Catholic Community
- Friends of Astronomy
- Cornell Rowing Team
- Robert Purcell Union Dining, Cook's Aid
- WVBR

Additional information:

John Toohey-Morales has broken down barriers in meteorology and is a strong advocate for diversity. After Cornell, John entered civil service at the National Weather Service. When he pivoted to broadcast news, Morales became the first degreed meteorologist in Spanish language media in the U.S. and later the first Latino meteorologist to appear on the *Today Show*. He also launched a commercial weather firm and an effort to recruit young minority students in meteorology by funding the ClimaData Minority Scholarship at AMS. His Cornell Red runs deep—John and his wife, Carmen, married under McGraw Tower during his 10th Reunion!