

Bobby S. Tsai

Cornell degree: BS '83 (ENG)



Highly selective universities in the U.S. are facing two significant novel challenges: the perceived value proposition of such an education and the justification of their admission criteria. These issues require more than incremental improvement; they may require a completely new model.

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

In order "to do the greatest good," we must have a clear and consensus definition of "good." Diversity is inherent to the Cornell community, from our state contract colleges and privately endowed colleges, to the school's international reach with multiple campuses in different geographies, and the greatest possible variety of studies. The Board of Trustees needs to ensure it has heard all these different voices and then mold a comprehensive answer to the question of what is "good" for Cornell and its myriad constituents and the world at large.

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 of Cornell is unique in scope. In practice, we must be inclusive and accepting of people with divergent ideas and interests. This is increasingly challenging in a society that is becoming more divisive and less tolerant. In addition to broadening and enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) initiatives, the board must foster an atmosphere in which we celebrate differences and respect disagreements. That is not an easy task in today's cultural environment.

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

Being of Chinese descent, I appreciate the fact that Cornell has over 100 years of history educating Chinese students; even today it wields important influence in the Greater China region. I was born in Taiwan, studied in the U.S., worked in China, and now live in Hong Kong. As the relationship between the U.S. and China—the world's two largest economies—is growing ever more contentious, I hope my background can help Cornell champion for Sino-U.S. peaceful cooperation instead of "winner takes all" competition.

Professional experience:

- Owner, Providence Joy Co. Ltd., 2016–present
- Executive Director, Bond Apparels International Limited, 2005–2016
- Chairman and CEO, Oriental Union Holdings Limited, 2000–2004

Alumni service:

- Cornell Alumni Advisory Board (CAAB), member, 2020–present; CAAB Membership Committee, 2015
- Cornell China Alumni Advisory Board, ex officio, 2019–present
- Cornell University Council, life member, 2019–present; member, 2002–2006, 2008–2012, 2014–2018; Administrative Board member, 2015–2016; International Programs Committee, member, 2003–2006, chair, 2004–2005
- Cornell Asia Alumni Leadership Advisors, member, 2016–present
- Cornell Alumni Association, Vice President, 2013–2015; Regional Director, 2010–2013
- Cornell Club of Hong Kong, Immediate Past President, 2003–2004
- Cornell Asian Alumni Association, member, 1997–present

Community/public service/philanthropic priorities:

- Chinese Exploration & Research Society, patron
- Faith Community Church, Board of Elders and Missions Committee member
- M+ Museum, founding patron
- Palace Museum of Hong Kong, founding patron

Other education:

- Master of Science, University of British Columbia, 1986

Student involvements/activities:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters Program of Ithaca and Tompkins County
- Delta Tau Delta Fraternity, Treasurer
- Tau Beta Pi, Engineering Honor Society, Social Secretary

Additional information:

I was the first in my family to receive a college degree in the U.S. My Cornell education and experience have significantly shaped both my professional career and my personal outlook. I am grateful for what I have learned from Cornell, and I also have two sons who graduated from Cornell. Big Red is very much part of the Tsai family. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to serve my beloved alma mater.