MR. SHANE A. DUNN

“The Cornell University Board of Trustees will need to decide how to openly, transparently, and effectively address major university and social issues, from the rising cost of a Cornell education to broader social inequalities.”

Cornell Degree: BS CALS, Communication, 2007; minor in Inequality Studies

Other Education: Boston College: Master of Arts, Higher Education Administration (2010); Advanced Studies in England, Bath, England, Semester Abroad (Fall 2005); Ithaca College, Candidate for BS in Sports Information and Communication (2003-2004 – transferred to Cornell sophomore year)

In her State of the University address, President Garrett charged the university with being “creative in seeking support from industry, foundations, and philanthropy” in order to strengthen Cornell’s foundation—its faculty. What impact have Cornell faculty had on your experience as a student and as an alum/na? How can you contribute to the discussion of broadening the ways in which we seek to add support for increased funding for the work of our faculty?

One of the most memorable classes I took at Cornell was Isaac Kramnick’s “American Political Thought.” In the final class, he reminded us of the immense privilege that comes with being college educated. At that time, one percent of people globally had a college degree, a humbling reality. He exhorted us to reflect on our privilege by using our education to make the world equal for more people. This profound statement resonates with me as a first-generation college graduate and as a professional dedicated to reducing inequality through education. As a trustee, I will share my experience in university development and alumni affairs in strategic discussions about how the university can seek creative ways of funding faculty research. I believe Cornell can leverage its reputation and the existence of Cornell Tech to proactively encourage more companies and foundations to be risk-taking in funding interdisciplinary work that is vital to addressing societal challenges.

Engaged Cornell, an initiative that will focus on establishing “community engagement and real-world learning experiences” for undergraduate students, will collaborate with Global Cornell to provide international service-learning opportunities for those students. This is just one way in which the university will strive to enhance the experience of undergraduate students. In what other ways do you believe the university should support students and prepare them for life after Cornell?

Cornell should ensure that advanced career and skills education is a significant element of every student’s experience, regardless of area of study or trajectory. We must do so while also maintaining our robust commitment to the liberal arts and social sciences. I am concerned by the skills gap between students enrolled in pre-professional programs such as business and hotel administration, who receive considerable advantages in career exploration, while liberal arts majors scramble for meaningful internships and full-time jobs. Moreover, first-generation college students and those without access to existing professional networks are disadvantaged, a dilemma I know well from personal experience. The university should listen more to alumni and professionals in all industries when seeking guidance on career preparation. Faculty should not be the primary resource for advising students on postgraduate plans. More needs to be done to ensure all students have every opportunity for professional and life success beyond college.

The university seeks to expand cross-campus academic programs and to grow, not only in New York City but also globally, including a soon-to-be-opened office in Shanghai. How would you apply the lessons you have learned (e.g., challenges and successes) within your industry to inform the conversation about Cornell’s presence in the global landscape?

As a degree professional in higher education, I have both academic and practical knowledge of the challenges faced by universities when they seek to increase their international presence. These challenges relate to student recruitment, faculty partnerships, local public policy alignment, and physical expansion. My work in alumni affairs and development at three global universities has trained me to engage directly with alumni and students from around the world. Working with alumni from diverse backgrounds has trained me to be an effective listener and facilitator. I will collaborate with alumni on strategic conversations about Cornell’s programmatic and physical presence around the world. We must work with alumni locally to identify strong partnerships and set achievable goals that will lead to long-term success on the ground. Alumni will be our most important ambassadors in new regions and will be critical to shaping the pace of expansion around the world.

Professional Experience:
- Excel Academy Charter Schools: Managing Director of Strategic Growth and Development (Boston, MA; 2013-Present)
- MIT Sloan School of Management Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving: Assistant Director of Student Engagement and Giving (Cambridge, MA; 2011-2013)
- Tufts University Office of Alumni Relations: Alumni Relations Officer – Shared Interest Groups (Medford, MA; 2009-2011)
- Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University: Program Assistant, Office of Annual Giving and Outreach (Cambridge, MA; 2007-2009)
- Advanced Studies in England: Summer Graduate Intern (Bath, England; Summer 2007)
- Cornell Urban Scholars Program Social Justice Fellow, Facing History & Ourselves and The Facing History School (New York, NY; Summer 2006)
- The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, Inc.: Summer Fellow for Evaluation (Utica, NY; Summer 2005)

Alumni Service:
- Class of 2007
  - President (2012-2017); 5th Reunion Co-Chair (2011-2012)
  - Cornell Club of Boston
    - President (2014-2016)
  - Cornell Alumni Association
    - Director from the Region (2011-2013); Director at Large (2013-2015)
  - Cornell University Council (2013-2017)
  - Young Alumni Interest Group Member (2013-2017)
  - Student and Campus Life
    - Advisory Council (2015-2016)
  - Cornell Alumni Advisory Board (2015-2018)
  - Cornell Annual Fund
    - National Campaign Committee Volunteer (2009-2016); 1865 Society Member (2013-Present); Ivy Society Member (2007-Present)
    - Sphinx Head Honor Society
    - Board of Directors (2014-2016)
    - CAAAN Volunteer (2007-Present)

Shane has also had previous experience as a Cornell volunteer on the Boston Sesquicentennial Advisory Board, with the Cornell Club of Boston, his Class, with the Cornell University Gay & Lesbian Alumni Association, and with the Cornell Tradition Recruitment Campaign.

Community/Public Service:
- GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders)
  - Board of Directors (2014-present);
  - Spirit of Justice Fundraising Dinner Committee (2012-2014)
- CASE (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education)
  - District 1 2014 Conference Executive Committee - Programs Co-Chair (2013-2014)
  - District 1 2013 Conference Executive Committee - Operations Co-Chair (2012-2013)
  - Social Media Coordinator, CASE District 1 and 2 Joint Conference, NYC (2011-2012)
- United States Public Service Academy
  - Massachusetts State Director (2008-2009)
- uAspire
  - First Generation College Applicant Mentor (2010-2011)
- Volunteer Research Assistant to Elizabeth Hollander, Senior Fellow at Tufts University’s Tisch College of Active Citizenship, to complete a study on civic engagement activities at member institutions of The Civic Engagement Research Universities Network (2008-2009)
- The Steppingstone Foundation Boston High School Student Mentor (2007-2008)
- Young Nonprofit Professionals Network Boston Chapter (2007-2012)

Additional Information:
Shane is engaged to Elizabeth Bernardi (BA Boston College, MBA Kellogg School of Management), a Senior Business Consultant at Liberty Mutual Insurance, Boston, MA. As a student at Cornell, Shane was a participant and team leader of Pre-Orientation Service Trips (POST) at the Cornell Public Service Center. He had paid work study positions at the Public Service Center, first as a community programs specialist and later as a student manager. In 2006 he was President of Into the Streets, the student-led group responsible for planning Cornell’s largest day of service. Shane also served the Office of Undergraduate Admissions as a Cornell University Ambassador. He was a Social Justice Fellow through the Cornell Urban Scholars Program (CUSP), a Cornell Traditions Fellow, a member of the Cornell Tradition Student Advisory Council, and a group leader for REACH (Raising Education Attainment Challenge) Teaching Tolerance. He was a founding member of the state-wide New York Campus Compact Student Committee on Civic Engagement and was inducted into the Sphinx Head Senior Honor Society in 2006. Shane was recognized by Cornell Daily Sun as one of the “25 Most Influential Cornell Undergraduates” in 2006 and received the Cornell Tradition Senior Recognition Award in 2007.