

# Why Cornell? - Cornell University - College Review

## **Essentials:**

Cornell University offers a challenging environment both academically and socially for many students. Those willing to take the initiative and work hard to take control of their college experience will grow to appreciate and treasure all that Cornell has to offer. Cornell University is often the second choice of many of the attendees who desire an Ivy League education, however, for any number of reasons did not gain admission to their first choice. Therefore, expectations for the school experience upon entering Cornell are often tempered. The good news is that students find the education at Cornell to be second to none and the opportunities for an enjoyable and rewarding social life to be excellent for those who work to attain one. It is a school that over time is appreciated and wins converts because the actual college experience ends up exceeding expectations for many students.

## **Strength of the School:**

The academic workload at Cornell University is demanding, requiring students to take their studies very seriously. This is usually not an issue because Cornell students tend to be driven, motivated and competitive.

The faculty is excellent and the teaching and overall educational experience is highly praised. A student can expect to be academically challenged at Cornell and gain in return a first-rate education. Cornell has seven undergraduate colleges and its overall large size provides the student a great assortment of majors and courses. In addition, opportunities for undergraduates to conduct research are numerous at this first rate research institution.

Cornell is located in the remote town of Ithaca, New York. The sizable and sprawling campus dominates the town and is set in an extraordinarily scenic location. The natural beauty of the surroundings and the physical impressiveness of the campus are very much appreciated by the students and residents alike. An aspect of the location that is not so well liked, however, are the long, arduous winters that are dominated by high winds and precipitation.

Fourteen thousand undergraduate students attend Cornell making it the largest of the Ivy League. A large student population and a large campus provide the advantage for the students to experience a wide variety of social options. There are numerous fellow students with various

interests and backgrounds to interact with. Along with this, Cornell sponsors a large assortment of student activities. These factors combine to allow students to build relationships that can define the college experience. On the other hand, the overall size of the campus and student body can lead to feelings that Cornell can be impersonal and makes some students feel lost at times.

Overall, the demanding Cornell experience translates as excellent preparation for post college life. A student who graduates Cornell is ready to face life's toughest challenges and has earned the prestige of a Cornell degree. Graduating students will also be a part of the exceptionally strong Cornell alumni network to assist them in their career.

### **Academics:**

- Cornell's academic reputation is outstanding. Students will gain a top-notch education, however, they must work hard to earn a degree. Overall, most courses are very challenging. Education at Cornell can be sink or swim, and failure is a possibility. Not all Cornell students make it through all four years.

- Students tend to be competitive, driven and not very cooperative in the classroom. An observation made is that some students can care more about earning a grade than actually learning the material because many students at Cornell tend to be career driven.

- Cornell is the Ivy League's largest school with 14,000 undergraduates. It offers a unique and diverse educational experience through its seven undergraduate schools. Three of the seven undergraduate schools are publicly funded by New York State. The seven schools have differing curricula and degree requirements. The largest of the seven is the "private" College of Arts and Sciences.

- Due to Cornell's large-size and its seven unique schools, undergraduates have the flexibility to choose from a wide assortment of majors and courses. Cornell incorporates the necessary resources to address a wide variety of academic needs.

- Cornell is committed to extending its well-regarded leadership in research even farther. The school is continually making additional investments in research capabilities especially in advanced science. Undergraduates are provided vast opportunities to participate in the research effort.

- The school's faculty enjoys an excellent reputation. A student will need to take the initiative in developing better working relationships with faculty.

- Class size varies widely over time. Freshman classes often take place in large lecture halls. As a student proceeds with their education, opportunities for smaller classes become the norm. At times, there exists a lack of personal attention. This is not unexpected from a school this size.

- There are also a rich variety of internship opportunities, off-campus programs and summer jobs available.

#### **Student/ Social Life:**

- Cornell has a large, sprawling campus populated by a wide variety of students. The opportunities for an active and satisfying social life are present. In addition, there is an extensive array of extracurricular activities, events and sports. It is possible, however, to feel lost in the crowd. At Cornell one must take control of their student and social life.

- The campus and its surroundings are picturesque. Cornell is located on the southern end of Lake Cayuga on a hilly campus with great views and natural beauty. Two beautiful gorges on campus add to the scenery. Those that enjoy nature and the great outdoors, including winter activities, are in for a treat.

- On the other hand, Cornell is located in an inaccessible, remote and rural location not near any major cities, therefore, on campus and near campus activities dominate the social scene. Many juniors and seniors choose to live off campus in Ithaca, in close proximity to the Campus.
  
- Harsh winter weather conditions are always an issue. Hilly roads combined with bad weather often make traveling to class an adventure.
  
- Cornell has quality dorm rooms and good living accommodations. The campus is well known for providing outstanding dining options. All freshmen live together in North Campus dormitories as Cornell desires that its newest students become acclimated to college life quickly.
  
- Varying degrees of attention are paid to varsity sports with the greatest focus placed on hockey and basketball.
  
- Cornell has a large Greek life contingent with over 60 fraternities and sororities. 30% of the student population are members of fraternities and sororities.
  
- Cornell has a total student population of over 20,000, with most of these students at the Ithaca-based campus. In Ithaca there is essential shopping, a relatively good variety of restaurants and a nearby mall. A great deal of the off-campus social scene takes place in Collegetown, a neighborhood in Ithaca adjacent to the campus. There are restaurants, bars and other attractions.
  
- Cornell's status as an Ivy League school and a major research institution makes it a very popular stop for many prominent speakers.

- A complaint that some students have is that a cumbersome bureaucracy exists at the school. This can sometimes make it difficult to resolve housing issues, scheduling issues and other things that may require the administration's assistance.

**Location:**

- Ithaca, NY, a college town that is easy to get around. Ithaca has fast food and upscale restaurants, shopping, supermarkets, beautiful, natural scenery, harsh winters and a population of non-Cornell Students of ten thousand. Ithaca has everything you need, but nothing more.
- Ithaca, pleasant but remote.

**Don't go to Cornell if:**

Don't go if you need personal attention and a personalized education. Cornell is described by some students as highly impersonal with a large campus and large student body by Ivy League standards. It is very challenging academically, pre-professional in nature and a sink or swim mentality exists at the school. Also don't go if you can't handle harsh winter weather or an isolated, remote location.

**Cornell Interview- College Specific Questions to Ask the Interviewer:**

- How did the weather affect your college experience either positively or negatively?
- How did the size of the campus and size of the student body affect your college experience?

- How would you rate Ithaca as a place to go to College?
- What research opportunities are present for undergraduates?
- How did you find your social niche at Cornell?
- How did your perceptions of Cornell change over your four years?
- How did Greek Life affect your college experience?

**Cornell University Quick Facts:**

Cornell University General Website:

<http://www.cornell.edu/>

Cornell University Financial Aid:

<http://www.finaid.cornell.edu/>

Cornell Campus Map:

[http://www.cornell.edu/img/maps/large\\_search.pdf](http://www.cornell.edu/img/maps/large_search.pdf)

Cornell University Athletics:

<http://www.cornellbigred.com/>

Cornell University Nickname: Big Red

Cornell University Undergraduates: 14,261

**Cornell University Famous Alumni:**

Kurt Vonnegut

Toni Morrison

Bill Maher

Janet Reno

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Peter Yarrow

Ann Coulter