

How connections grow between campus and the community

GARY STEWART, Guest Columnist 12:16 p.m. EST December 26, 2014



(Photo: CORNELL UNIVERSITY)

Friends and neighbors:

Among the many things we are grateful for this year, and every year, are the town-gown partnerships that are part of daily life in the greater Ithaca area, and on campus.

Representative snapshots of this work, below, were found at Cornell's annual Town-Gown Awards earlier this month, and covered in The Journal.

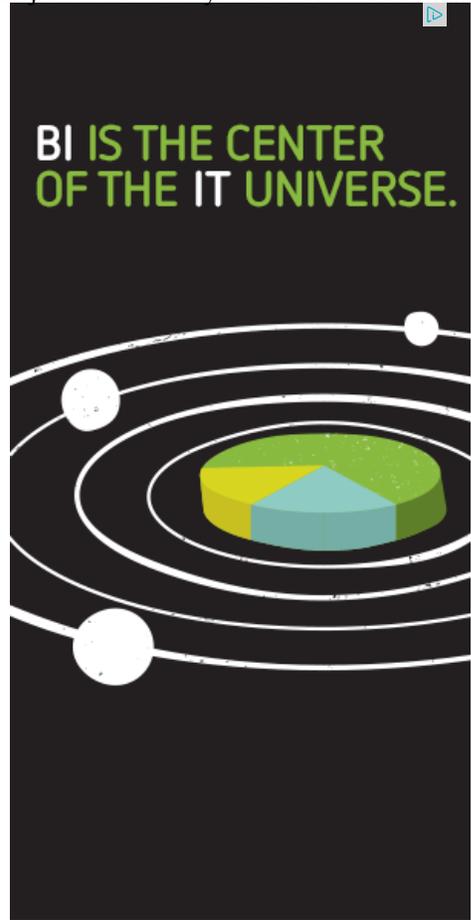
This event is affectionately called the TOGOs, and this year 200-plus community and campus leaders heard:

1. VP Susan Murphy recognize the campus-area leadership of St. Luke Lutheran Church, which hosts important town-gown meetings, provides space for student study hours and programs, and collaborates with Cornell's Off-Campus Housing Office on a number of fronts.
2. VP Kyu Whang lead the presentation honoring the Cayuga Lake Monitoring Partnership, which has transformed town-gown dialogue on the health of the lake from soundbite anecdotes to data-driven initiatives that value good science and campus-community expertise.
3. Plantations Director Christopher Dunn address the value of "Kids Discover the Trail," which provides curriculum-based field trips to the eight sites of the Discovery Trail for Ithaca pre-K through grade 5 students. Sites on the Trail include Cornell's Lab of Ornithology, Johnson Museum, and the Plantations.
4. VP Mary Opperman recognize Rev, the successful downtown business incubator that offers entrepreneurs a place to grow their business, with support from the state of New York, Cornell, Ithaca College, Tompkins Cortland Community College, and the business community.
5. VP Joel Malina introduced representative community and campus members who work tirelessly on food distribution and recovery networks. These include students, Cornell Dining and the University's Vegetable Research Farm, all working with local non-profits and food pantries.
6. Per custom, President Skorton spoke at the Town-Gown Awards, and was introduced by Greater Ithaca Activities Center Director Marcia Fort, Ithaca City School District Superintendent Luvelle Brown and former Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce President Jean McPheeters, who thanked David for his leadership, collaborative spirit, and a willingness to be engaged on community issues, including race relations, the economy, and our shared quality of life.
7. The Town-Gown Awards concluded with the announcement of a donation to support United Way of Tompkins County's Summers of Service scholarships in the name of Robin Davisson and President Skorton, and acknowledged by United Way of Tompkins County President James Brown. The program was created by and is largely funded through Cornell's internationally recognized student campaign. Scholarships, resourced by Cornell University Relations, will be awarded to local high school students with an interest in public engagement.
8. Finally, solid, progressive partnerships are the norm for Cornell and Ithaca. Though we might not hear about them every day, town-gown collaborations are appreciated by many, while benefiting thousands.

Happy New Year, and as always, thanks for reading East Hill Notes.

East Hill Notes are published the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. Gary Stewart is director for community relations at Cornell University. Submit "Questions for Cornell" to gjs28@cornell.edu or by writing the Office of Community Relations, Cornell University, 114 Day Hall, Ithaca NY 14853.

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