Provost’s Review of the Social Sciences at Cornell - DRAFT
Co-chairs: Judy Appleton and Ted O’Donoghue

In 2006, President Skorton invited an external committee to review the social sciences at Cornell. The opening statement in their full report reads as follows:

“Cornell is a great university, one of the world’s leading research universities. It is better known for its strength in engineering, the sciences and the humanities than for the social sciences. The panel believes this to be a fair judgement and so do faculty and administrators.” In addition, the committee opined that “the whole of social sciences at Cornell is not as great as the sum of the parts”.

That external committee went on to suggest a variety of ideas for how to improve the social sciences at Cornell. In response to their report, there has been a new focus on the social sciences over the past decade, including some significant structural changes—perhaps most notably the reorganization of the Economics Department. While improvements have been made, it is appropriate at this 10-year milestone to review our progress and to strategize about future improvements to the social sciences at Cornell.

Provost Kotlikoff has requested that a review process be initiated as follows.

**Charge:** Review the current state of the social sciences at Cornell, and identify opportunities for continuing to strengthen the social sciences at Cornell.

**Scope:** The review will focus on the traditional social science disciplines as they appear in all colleges and schools, as well as research infrastructure units that support the social sciences. However, the review will also recognize and consider disciplines that intersect traditional social sciences. Contributions to the research, teaching, and public-engagement missions of the university, as well as the organization of social sciences faculty throughout the university, will be included.

**Process:** First, a small internal committee will be convened to develop a document that describes the current state of the social sciences at Cornell. The report produced by the committee will be descriptive—it will not provide a critique of social sciences, nor will it be prescriptive in tone. The report will be informed by data and information that are internal and external to Cornell, pertaining to the teaching, research, and public-engagement missions of the university. The internal committee is not intended to be representative of all social science disciplines, but rather is meant to be a small group with enough knowledge to produce the descriptive report. The Provost will invite nominations from the campus and will appoint the membership.

Second, a group of highly regarded scholars, external to Cornell, will be identified and invited by the Provost to review the report of the internal committee and to participate in a site visit that will include interviews, tours, and discussion. This group will be asked to provide its assessment, together with recommendations for further strengthening the social sciences at Cornell.

**Please send all comments or nominations for internal and external committee membership to ssreview@cornell.edu**