Welcome to Cornell University and Summer College. You are now part of a fifty-year tradition of high school students’ participation in the academic life of the university.

Unlike fifty years ago, the program is quite large, with over 1,000 students representing more than forty countries and forty states. Students in the crowd today represent the program’s reach. Sitting among you are a cadet from a military academy in North Carolina, a dancer from Chicago here to study fashion, a student from India ready to immerse himself in engineering, and 135 students from China who have traveled to study everything from political science to art.

The program’s scale and the diversity among this group reflect the world of opportunities and resources Cornell offers. This nearly 150-year-old university boasts fourteen colleges and schools offering seventy-five major fields of study. Summer College students have access to nineteen libraries, a planetarium, an arboretum, a movie theater, four recreation centers, and an untold number of interesting people engaged in exciting work.

In three or six weeks you will leave with a better sense of what Cornell offers but also a better sense of who you are and what you want out of life. To aid in that process, Summer College is introducing a series of free intergroup communication workshops twice weekly, so that you enter college prepared to thrive among your new communities and to succeed academically.

To accomplish these goals, you must be committed to both your courses and your summer community. I encourage you to make the effort to get out of your comfort zone, so please introduce yourself to as many people as possible and take advantage of every resource at your disposal.

The courses are fast-paced and rigorous. If you are a procrastinator, it’s time to mend your ways; that habit won’t help you in an accelerated college class. To help ensure your success, we’ve mounted all the resources you need, including the writing and math walk-in tutorial clinics in Balch Hall Sunday through Thursday evenings. Do drop in to the writing clinic to polish your paper drafts, including what you think is your final version. These courses require your best effort.

We’re proud to note that your teachers are some of Cornell’s finest professors. Their support includes exceptional teaching assistants whose primary task is seeing that you understand course content and what you need to do in order to be successful. We strongly recommend that you visit with instructors and teaching assistants during their office hours.

If you haven’t already, let student disability services know what your needs are, including any special dietary restrictions. Also, be sure to read the Welcome Booklet for all the academic resources at your disposal, as well as the housing and dining brochure in your room. I know it’s not high on your list of summer activities, but it will help orient you to campus.

If you have not already visited our office in Day Hall, please feel free to do so. We’re ready to support you, whether it’s to talk about your academic, social, or personal concerns. Please contact me or Associate Director Janna Bugliosi so we can meet to discuss what’s on your mind.

No less important than this generous academic support is the social and medical support. Your residential life program directors, Karli Buday and Susan Riley, and their terrific staff of residential community advisors and graduate student interns have structured a full menu of social activities. They’ll also be conducting nightly check-ins and making sure everyone abides by the house rules and codes of conduct that you signed before coming.

At some point in your life, your parents might have told you that rules are in place for your safety. Your safety is pre-eminent with us as well. We encourage you to walk with others—and, if needed, there are 123 Blue Light phones on campus that are a direct connection to Cornell Police. Just lift the receiver or press the button. Use the phones when you are lost, want to report a suspicious incident or a medical emergency, or for any other kind of assistance or information. You can also dial 911 from your own phone.

You’re heard the saying, “Ithaca is Gorges.” Our gorges are beautiful, but they also pose a particular challenge, as you’ll see in a short film today. You need to marvel at the gorges without going in the water. Hot day, doesn’t matter. The undertow is extremely dangerous. Through the local bus system and trips scheduled by residential staff, you’ll be able to swim in local parks and cool off at waterparks.

Like your parents, we want you to eat well, sleep well, and stay safe. But, if you do get sick, there is 24/7 on-call medical support through the Gannett Health Center. Should you need other emergency care, we will transport you to the Cayuga Medical Center and Urgent Care after hours. Staff will be in touch with parents if you spend a night in the hospital or are prescribed antibiotics.

Lastly, parents: Thanks for making this summer possible. Your efforts are not lost on any of us. Because of your scheduling, financing, fundraising, and driving, your son’s or daughter’s world just got that much bigger. To keep track of our activities, read the student-staffed Summer Times on our website and follow the Google link on our site to the social activities calendar. Students: Text, e-mail, and call your parents. Cornell’s Summer College is at its best as a shared experience.

Jim Schechter, Summer College Director