FIRST YEAR REFLECTIONS
THANK YOU CLASS OF 2023 FOR SHARING YOUR MEMORIES

What were the best things about your first-year experience?

Meeting my best friends, studying what I love, having the best year of my life
Finding a cool on-campus job (shameless plug-join Cornell Productions!)
Adjusting to a new pace of life, sometimes hectic and stressful but very much worth it
Trying things I've always wanted to do and meeting new people, then suddenly seeing these same people all around campus
Martha Pollack complimenting my Crocs
Building a snowman and naming him after Kamala Harris
Sledding down the Slope on cardboard boxes
The beauty of Cornell's campus! I enjoyed watching the sunset from the Slope and walking to class every day. Even when it snowed a lot, it was beautiful!

My first year at Cornell allowed me to explore my interests in depth no matter what they were. I joined two clubs and a project team, all of which were vastly different in focus and peer group. Cornell allowed me to find a sense of belonging in all three. It's rare to find a place that allows you to apply yourself exactly how you want to, and Cornell is one such place. The quality and variety of both my experiences and my resulting groups of friends is beyond anything I could have dreamed of for my first year of college.
Outdoor Odyssey, Apple Fest, Cornell Concert Commission concerts
Meeting people
Going to the hockey games, playing catch in the quads, building snowmen
Lying on the dorm carpet with my friends, drawing orbitals with Dr Lee, and Sunday Brunch at RPCC!
Belonging: No matter who you are this place is so big that you're bound to find a club or group that holds your interests.
Friends: I've made the best friends I've ever had here
Professors: The college stereotype about all professors not caring about who you are or how you do in the class is pretty much unheard of here; every professor I’ve had thus far is always open to questions and willing to get to know you.

Hockey games and the Daya concert

Meeting so many new people and tennis. Definitely being able to continue playing tennis.

Meeting so many amazing people, be it students or professors, is what made the year the best of my life. Everyone loves what they do. I could find people of such diverse and dynamic interests everywhere I went. Office hours are fantastic. Getting to know professors beyond the classroom and talking about things other than coursework was always a treat.

Hanging out with my roommates, eating roast veggie stiratos at Cafe Jennie, running in the arboretum

Late night trips to 7/11 or Nasties (Bear Necessities)

Discovering the wonders of Terrace burritos. Spending hours in the library with friends, sometimes getting work done

Making ice cream in fdsc 1101

Trying something for the first time through a club and discovering new friends and a new passion: K-pop dance

Brunch at RPCC on Sunday, climbing at the Lindseth wall

The gorges, my friends in chemistry, and sunsets on the Slope

Meeting so many great people! Cornell became a true home.

Meeting like-minded people

My first-year experience would have been nothing without PSP. I met people who currently push me to grow every day, some don’t even realize it.

I enjoyed seeing all the resources available to me as a Cornell student and am very grateful for the education I am receiving.

Guest speakers

Going to RPCC for Sunday brunch seeing everyone exhausted and in their PJ’s but having a great time sitting and laughing with friends

Mann Library second floor by the window at one of the tall white tables, because I did some of my best prelim studying in that spot
Donlon hall 5th floor!!! D5 we thrive!!

Meeting so many new and amazing people, some of which I see being lifelong friends

Joining the Big Red Marching Band!!

Making new friends

Living on North Campus with other freshmen! It is so unique to your time here; it’s only for one year and you get to bond with your class. Late night Nasties runs with friends! Taking a break from work and enjoying the outdoors (picnics, walks, exploring different parts of campus, exploring the areas around campus).

I loved the opportunity to meet people from different places and with different backgrounds than me. I loved how welcoming everyone is and how easy it is to get involved with random things on campus.

I loved meeting such amazing people and making new friends. There are so many supportive people at Cornell, and it’s easy to connect with people more than it was at high school. As much as I hated doing my laundry, I loved the freedom I got at Cornell. The ability to go anywhere at any time was great. Some of my most enjoyable times were at west campus dinner days with friends, dance team practices, RPCC study nights, and even the endless hours spent studying at Olin library. I also loved hanging out on the arts quad and libe Slope when it got warmer in early March 2020.

O-Week (Orientation Week)

I enjoyed the community of Cornell the most. It’s scary to leave home, but pretty shortly after arriving, you realize that you have this whole new type of family. I cannot pinpoint one particular thing that stuck out the most because as cheesy as it sounds, it’s all those little things that you don’t even think about in the moment that make your experience so amazing. To my Dyson friends in particular: get ready for the best community ever! I cannot express how much I love Dyson; the students and faculty are always there for you, and the family that you receive is absolutely amazing. Get ready for an incredible freshman year Class of 2024:)

Festival 24 was an absolutely amazing experience to start the year. It got me introduced to so many people that I am now good friends with, and is a must see show as well. Living in Risley was the highlight of my year. From the theatre that is in the dorm, to the shops which allow really cool things to be made, I always had something to do. But the most important part about Risley was the community that we have. The weekly events are such a much-needed break, and even with the shift to online learning, the community is still present. I had a job at the dining hall, and not only was earning money, but it was great to see so many students every time I worked, as well as befriend the full-timers at the dining hall, who are really cool people. The staff at RPME is the best :).
The food, the homecoming concert, snow days

I enjoyed meeting people from vastly different backgrounds from me; taking classes that I was genuinely interested in, and joining the band

Spending late nights with my suite mates playing poker and late nights studying in Morrison Hall with my friends before big exams

I loved watching how the campus scenery changed through the seasons!

Apple Fest; CU Downtown; Finals Week

There are always people here, willing to help you out, if you reach out. I realize I can be proud of being different.

Watching the sun set on Libe Slope, movie nights with friends, taking a Learning Where You Live course and getting to know the Faculty in Residence

Meeting so many amazing people; people from different backgrounds, countries, and cultures than my own. Becoming active in Cru, a multiethnic Christian fellowship on campus; my STCSCI 3200 class.

I’m so lucky to have made some amazing friends from my floor and classes this year, and spending time with them whether it be in town, at meals, or studying was always something I looked forward to.

I loved being able to meet and collaborate with people from all around the world. One of my favorite events was Club Fest where hundreds of clubs on campus come together to be in one space. As a first year it was so nice to visit each table and learn about clubs while doing fun activities with your friends. One of my favorite moments was getting some free, trendy clothes from Cornell Thrift.

Making lifelong friends, staying up way too late with those friends, and learning new things!

I enjoyed exploring Ithaca and the Cornell campus with my friends on the weekends. I loved the freedom I had on campus as a college student to choose whatever I want to do. I had an amazing time at the Cornell Hockey games cheering on the team with all of my friends and the crazy Lynah Faithful.

I enjoyed making new friends and meeting a lot of new people with similar interests as mine. I loved going to the Cornell hockey games and standing the entire game with the student section.

Meeting new people and making new friends. Living on my own. The food.
Making new friends, taking classes I’m genuinely interested in, joining/learning about clubs that correspond with my interests

Staying up late in the common room of my dorm (JAM!) and singing songs, watching movies, or just goofing around with the other people in my unit. I’m really grateful for the small family I found in my dorm, and it was always comforting to know that someone would be in the lounge to take study breaks with or to just catch up after a long day.

I loved going to the dairy bar to get ice cream; I tried new foods I would never imagine having in my life; and watching the sunset from the Slope.

I have met some incredible friends who have brought out the best in me. One new friend I met this year loves rock-climbing and wanted to climb with me at the rock-climbing wall in Bartels Hall. I had no idea that Cornell had a rock-climbing wall, and I also love trying new things/new sports. However, I was scared of heights but decided to try rock-climbing with her anyway. Little did she know that she helped me conquer my fear of heights. After that I would try to climb with her every week.

One of my favorite and most memorable parts of orientation week was the boating activity on Beebe Lake. My two new friends and I were in a three-person kayak and we were all in awe of the beauty Ithaca has to offer. We paddled towards the gorge that we heard had a small waterfall around a corner. To get there we had to go under a bridge that was part of the walking trail around Beebe Lake. All three of us are engineers and were mesmerized by the bridge—and looked up to appreciate its beauty and stability. I felt in sync with them and that I truly belonged here at Cornell. These two friends became two of my best friends.

As an Orientation Leader, I want to help others experience their “bridge moment” in which they feel like they really belong here.

Cornell is known for getting really cold in the winter. I love the way the campus looks covered in snow. I am used to snow, however, one of my best friends is not. This past winter we got so much snow that we had two snow days. On the first snow day my friend said she had never built a snowman before, and I told her that we had to change that. She was extremely excited to use rainbow candy canes and Hershey kisses that she had in her room to decorate the snowman. Our candy snowman is her first snowman and my favorite snowman.

Playing with the band at all the athletic events. It was something I looked forward to at the end of every week after grinding through classes and homework. It’s exciting to watch the games and cheer on our teams, and I get to hang-out with my closest friends. Sitting on the
Slope and watching the sunset. No matter how many times I see it, the view down the Slope never fails to take my breath away.

What is your favorite place on campus?

I love walking through all the trails around campus whenever I need to clear my head or when I just have some free time in my day.

The Physical Sciences Building because it has amazing views, comfortable couches, and it’s a great study space!

Although this is probably a campus-wide favorite, I love the Slope. It has the prettiest views of the sunset that I’ve ever seen, and everyone hanging out there on sunny days makes Cornell really feel like a community. Watching the sunset during orientation, after classes, or on the last day before leaving campus are some moments that stand out in my mind as some of the times that I felt most at-home and at peace while at Cornell.

The Cocktail Lounge in Uris Library because it has a beautiful overview of the Slope that looks out into Ithaca. It is a great place to study since it is open 24 hours or even just be with friends throughout the day. So, even when it is cold outside, you can still get the effect of being able to be with friends on the Slope :)

Cafe Jennie!! The food is amazing. The cocktail lounge is my favorite study space.

Harry Potter Library, Arts Quad, Olin Stacks

Sage Chapel because the inside is extraordinary. It also has a lot of interesting history, including the graves of many important Cornell figures.

Catherwood Library because it is a great place to get work done for ILRies and has great seating options for group or individual studying. Lynah Rink because the atmosphere at the hockey games is so fun, exciting, and electric. It’s hard to find a place on campus where there is more Big Red energy and cheering.

Clara Dickson Hall—it was my home away from home. I met my best friends there and I made memories with them I will always remember.

The Green Dragon Café and Cocktail Lounge for studying and doing homework because they provide really productive environments (and Green Dragon has the best coffee). I also love spending time on the Slope or the Arts Quad to catch some rays when the weather’s nice.

Definitely the Law Library. It is so beautiful on the outside and inside. It’s a great place to study, everyone is so professional, and I love the Fork and Gavel Cafe.

West campus dining halls (yum!), Libe Slope Cocktail Lounge, Fine Arts Library
Uris Library—On the left, the window shows people climbing up and down the Slope; on the right, the book stacks stand silently on the side.

Nasties cause they have the best mozzarella sticks!

Temple of Zeus is a gorgeous study spot with great food!

The Jameson 2nd floor lounge—countless study sessions, hang outs, and good memories.

Risley Theatre. Olin 7th floor (great views, and a ton of plays) and Carpenter Hall.

The Ag Quad has to have been one of my favorite spots on campus. As a Dyson student, my friends and I spent quite a bit of time not only in Warren or Mann Library, but sitting outside on the Ag Quad on nice days whether it be to relax, study, or catch up with friends. Another one of my favorite spots is definitely RPCC. This is not only because of the yummy Sunday brunches, but it’s because dinners were always my favorite part of the days since I got to catch up with friends.

My favorite places to do work are the Africana Library and the White Library in Uris. They’re both great places for people who study better with fewer distractions around them.

I didn’t really get to explore campus as much as I wanted to and should have. The majority of my free time was spent at dance team practices or at Olin library. I do love the peacefulness by the footbridge over Beebe lake. My favorite place to eat on Central Campus is Bus Stop Bagels. Also, when it’s warmer, the Arts Quad and Libe Slope are great places to just relax and enjoy the nature and liveliness all around.

Appel. It was the only place that could feed me at 2pm on a Tuesday. Catherwood Library, an ILR student’s best friend when it comes to reading your 7th book for labor history. And finally, the roof of PSB—best view of the whole campus including the clocktower.

My favorite study place on campus is the Architecture Library; the chairs do not look that comfy but they are so nice. My favorite place to eat is the Ivy Room in Willard Straight, all day breakfast, baby!

Trillium has amazing ramen. Uris Library is a pleasant and peaceful study space. The Slope for the views of course! The seating area outside of Klarman Hall is beautiful when its warm out!

Mews because that’s where I met/became close with most of my friends.

nasty’s @ 2am :)

Botanic Gardens: it was so colorful when I went during O-week, and the Winter Garden was awesome, too. Definitely recommend catching a tour or just walk around.

Bailey Hall: I got to see awesome shows here; keep an eye out for the Concert Series.
Willard Straight: convenient location and open most of the time. Lots of events held here, or you can just take a nap on one of the sofas.

Music Library: close to North Campus and generally nice place to study.

The footbridge from North to Bailey: great views of Beebe Lake and the waterfall, though it’s a pretty steep walk.

Terrace in Statler: good salads and gyro; also nice places to sit if you avoid the crowds.

Temple of Zeus. Tea is served AND spilled there. I can’t study anywhere else.

The Slope and Risley Dining. I love the view from the top of the Slope, especially at night (when you can see the lights of the city below).

The benches in front of Uris Library (facing the Slope) were one of my favorite places to study on warm days.

I like Risley Dining because the food there is tasty, and the dining hall is beautiful inside. I ate there so often that Garry, the guy who swipes us in, learned my name and the names of my friends (who ate there with me). He made me feel at home at Cornell.

I love the reading room in Snee. It’s close to the Engineering Quad, which is convenient for me, and it makes for a really tranquil study area. The slanted windows are wonderful. I love being there in a rainstorm and being able to see and hear the rain overhead.


The arts quad on a warm day because there are so many people around having fun or just relaxing.

Running around Beebe Lake and watching the trees change with the seasons!! Also the botanical gardens!!

I really love the look-out points over the bridges, my favorite being the westward view from the main bridge to North, especially on a stormy winter night. It’s so beautiful and really provides a great place to just relax and really clear your mind on the way back to the dorm.

Morrison Hall. As an animal science major most of my classes are there so I’ve spent quite a bit of time there.

The Fine Arts Library!

The view from the clock tower! When you look out over campus it is so peaceful. I could stay up there for hours.
Ezra’s Teaching Barn! Cows, chickens, sheep, pigs, oh my! I’ve learned so much interacting with all the adorable animals here.

A.D. White Library: I basically lived there throughout the year. Getting a nice desk spot with a view of the Slope was one of the best things that could happen when I got there.

Big Red Barn: Swing Dancing there on Mondays was tremendously fun and a great way to meet grad students who you really do not get to interact with otherwise.

The Slope, A.D. White Library, the Ag Quad, top floor of Bradfield Hall, Low Rise 6

Mann Library because the ratio of productive areas to nap areas is perfect

The Browsing Library in Willard Straight Hall because the old yearbooks are super cool and a great distraction

The trails behind the observatory are very peaceful and nice to walk through.

Helen Newman Hall because its short walk from the north campus dorms encouraged me to stick to a weekly schedule to exercise at the gym with a friend

Flatbread and smoothies at Mac’s Café

Top of the clock tower

Beebe Lake around the back near the waterfall because it’s so peaceful to sit and take in nature there before or after class

Willard Straight Hall, three eateries, the reading room, a movie theater, study rooms, and more. It is a maze and packs a lot in.

The Slope can’t beat the view of the sun setting over west campus and Cayuga Lake!

Mann Library and the Slope on a warm day

Klarman Atrium because it has a really nice ambience.

Risley Theatre.

Olin 7th floor (great views, and a ton of plays)

Carpenter Hall

The Slope, A.D. White Library, the Ag Quad, top floor of Bradfield Hall, Low Rise 6