



## Cornell University

Office of Organizational Effectiveness  
Division of Human Resources & Safety Services

**Peter C. Halladay, Senior Director**  
#20 Thornwood Drive, Suite 101  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
t. 607.255.3453  
f. 607.255.7940  
e. [pch9@cornell.edu](mailto:pch9@cornell.edu)

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Dear AASHE Program Reviewers,

Cornell has recently revamped our behavioral competencies, the Skills for Success, which we have been using for nearly two decades. In doing so, we are proud of including “Sustainability” as a major innovation influencing the Cornell culture and guiding every aspect of our operation.

We have leveraged the Skills for Success in our hiring practices, our performance management process, our leadership programming, our 360 degree feedback process, and our succession planning. Before revising them with the newly included skill of Sustainability, we benchmarked with literally dozens of peer institutions. Few of them utilize behavioral competencies as widely as Cornell, and none of them have included sustainability of people, the environment, and fiscal responsibility as a competency. This innovation will enable us to speak to this value on a regular basis, and build metrics into, among other things, every staff performance assessment, every job description and every hiring decision.

This is not only an innovation in the way we manage talent at Cornell, but it is an innovation in the way we look at behavioral competencies. Our previous Skills for Success are a short list of critical characteristics and behaviors employees receive feedback on in an annual performance assessment. As we discussed how best to include Sustainability, we didn’t want to just add another bullet point. Instead we created a framework statement that introduced sustainability into all the other competencies. It isn’t one more thing we do, it is HOW we do everything we do.

We are formally rolling out the new Skills for Success and the revised tools for performance management, job descriptions, etc. right now in 2014. Already my office has shared these with several other universities who have contacted us to request our process and tools. We fully expect this to be an innovative new model that our Ivy League peers, and other collegial universities will be studying.

Sincerely,

Chris Halladay  
Associate Vice President, Organizational Effectiveness  
Cornell University’s Division of Human Resources and Safety Services  
#20 Thornwood Dr., Suite 101  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
607-255-3453  
[pch9@cornell.edu](mailto:pch9@cornell.edu)