Testimony of
Linda Jarschauer Johnson, Executive Director
Cornell in Washington Program
December 11, 2003

**Introduction**

My name is Linda Jarschauer Johnson and I live at 2415 20th Street, NW in Washington, DC. I am, and have been for the past 20 years, the Executive Director of the Cornell in Washington program. In that capacity, I am also in charge of the Cornell Center facility, which originally housed three programs: in Architecture, Public Policy and Industrial and Labor Relations. The Architecture Program was terminated in 1990. The Public Policy program was broadened to include an American Experience study option and is now referred to as the Cornell in Washington program (CIW). The Industrial and Labor Relations Field Study program has remained the same. For clarification purposes, Cornell in Washington is used to describe the major academic program housed in the Cornell Center, which is Cornell University's campus in Washington, DC. The Cornell in Washington program provides an opportunity for select Cornell juniors and seniors to spend a semester in Washington working as externs, taking classes and doing research. Students work three days a week at an organization of their choice - governmental, non-profit or private, in any area of interest. This semester we've had students working for Congress, Federal departments, think tanks, the media, advocacy organizations, and law firms, among others. (See attached list for Fall 2003 externship organizations.) Over 2,000 students have participated in the program thus far and our complete list is extensive and varied. Students do not receive pay or credit for their externship experience, but it is a required part of the program. Students carry a full academic load, taking one of the two core courses (8 credits), public policy or American experience. The main difference between these core courses is the nature of the research project. Public policy students use social scientific research methods, using comparisons to make generalizations. American Experience students tell a story about a person, place or thing using a descriptive method. Students round out their Washington experience taking one

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elective courses for a total of 12 or 18 credits. I am pleased to say that most students say it's their best Cornell semester. Unlike the main campus, our classes are small and we are not centrally isolated in upstate New York. We're quite proud of our website and invite you visit it at <ciw.cornell.edu>. Since 1998, we have offered a Summer in Washington program, which is shorter in duration, offers fewer electives and does not include the research component.

Cornell in Washington began in 1980 with six students and a budget of $5,000. In 1983, we negotiated a ten-year lease at 2148 O Street, NW. The apartments on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor were renovated for our students, who occupied the building as a matter of right in the fall of 1983. We requested zoning approval to use the 1st floor for academic and administrative purposes and were granted that right in 1984. The first floor was renovated and classes were taught there for the first time during the fall 1984 semester. The original BZA exception (No. 14044 January 31, 1984) was for a three-year period and in 1987, Cornell applied to extend that permission. I am happy to say that some of the neighbors, who originally voiced concerns about our use of the building in 1984, testified on our behalf at the new hearing. We were granted an exception (No. 14623 December 2, 1987), in perpetuity, provided that Cornell students live in the residential portion of the building. Last year, Cornell began serious negotiations with the owner to purchase the building. We have enjoyed good relations with our neighbors and neighborhood organizations over the last 20 years. Last year, I contacted the ANC and the Dupont Circle Citizens Association to inform them of our intention to buy the building and to ask if there were any concerns about the purchase and our expansion into the lower level. There was only positive feedback.

**Background and Description of Project**

Cornell purchased the existing building at 2148 O Street, NW (Square 69, Lot 821) on July 21, 2003. We are currently requesting a special exception of our campus plan in order to permit an expansion of educational, research and related

administrative uses of Cornell University's Washington, D.C. campus to include both the first floor, currently permitted, and the lower level.

From 1985 until 1998, the lower level was leased to the Capitol Women's Clinic. The clinic performed abortions, among other medical procedures, and was the scene of large demonstrations every year on the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade. In August 1998, the clinic went out of business for financial reasons and the space has been vacant since then.

Cornell would like to expand into the lower level for the following purposes:

- To provide an up-to-date video conferencing space for academic and extra-curricular programs.
- To gain much needed storage space.
- To move the office of the Cornell Club of Washington, a volunteer-based alumni organization, to the lower level and use their current office on the first floor for academic purposes. The club's office is used primarily for record storage and the Club uses one of our meeting rooms for monthly Board meetings.
- To provide research and meeting space for the Cornell Center for Policy Research. They previously rented space near Dupont Circle and now are on upper Connecticut Avenue. They are anxious to move to our Cornell facility to take advantage of our internet access and other Cornell-related services.

Cornell does not intend to increase the number of students participating in the program. We will continue to discourage students from bringing cars to Washington and will not permit them to get residential parking stickers if they do bring a car. We will not serve alcoholic beverages at events because many of the students are not yet 21. The number of additional employees using the lower level may total 8-10, but due to the nature of their work they will not all be in the building at the same time.

RTKL has worked with us to develop a conceptual plan for the use of the lower level in order to provide for the functions needed and to accommodate the mechanical constraints of the space. The plans are provided and Ashley Howell is available to outline the considerations taken in developing this plan.

**Special Exception for Amendment to Approved Campus Plan**

As stated on pages 5 through 11 of our Prehearing Statement, as well as in the report of the Office of Planning, we believe that our application meets the tests for special exception approval. I would be pleased to answer any specific questions that you may have.

**ANC Support**

At it's November 12th meeting, ANC 2B unanimously approved our application for expansion into the lower level. Chairman Vincent Micone commented, that in his experience, ours was the first campus plan with no opposition. We are grateful for their unconditional support.

**Conclusion**

Cornell has been a part of the community for the past twenty years. We have tried to be a good neighbor and I think the lack of opposition from neighborhood organizations and residents is proof that we have succeeded. We hope that our application for an exception will be granted and we will continue to be a vital part of the Dupont Circle community.

Fall 2003 Externship Organizations

American Civil Liberties Union, Legislative Office
American Enterprise Institute, Office of Lynne Cheney
American Enterprise Institute, Social and Political Studies
Amnesty International USA, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
and Pensions
Arnold Worldwide
Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc., Economic and Business Analysis
Brookings Institution, Center for Urban and Metropolitan Policy
Centers for Disease Control, Bureau of STD Control, Administrative Offices
CET Academic Programs
Congressman Filner, Bob (D-CA)
C-SPAN, Programming
Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Information
Technology and ECommerce
Department of Defense, OASD/International Security Agency, Western
Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section
District of Columbia Public Defender Service, Investigation
District of Columbia Public Defender Service, Juvenile Division
Economic Strategy Institute
Federal Bar Association
Georgetown University, Department of Family Medicine
Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Inc., Hemisphere Affairs
House Committee on International Relations
ICMA, International City/County Management Association Inquiry Service
Institute for Educational Leadership, Coalition for Community Schools
Kohn, Kohn & Colapinto, P.C.
Migration Policy Institute
National League of Cities, Policy and Federal Relations
NBC, WRC-TV, Sports - George Michael Sports Machine
Polaris Project, US Research/ Victim Outreach
Senate Democratic Policy Committee
Senator Biden, Joseph R. (D-DE)
Senator Dodd, Christopher (D-CT), Subcommittee on Health, Education, Labor
Seward and Kissel
Sierra Club, Global Warming Department
The Century Foundation
UBS, R & R Financial Group
Youth Service America