Dear Alumni and Friends of ORIE,

Ithaca has emerged from its annual early January hibernation and our optimistically named spring semester is underway. Indeed this is a hopeful time of year. Your School has been buffeted by the budgetary storms but is holding its own, and in fact making good headway with some modest new initiatives that improve our academic environment and advance our outreach mission.

Our alumni have been sterling in their support, with gifts so far this academic year already exceeding the typical annual total, despite difficult economic times. We are very grateful to those who have stepped forward with assistance - thank you! Those gifts help tremendously in maintaining excellence in our various efforts.

The initiatives I mentioned at the outset are designed to increase the reach of the School, both electronically and physically:

• Together with the Systems Engineering program, we now have a first class video conferencing facility as well as a classroom equipped for distance learning that has a twin in our Manhattan location "Cornell Financial Engineering Manhattan." In addition to our own use, we now offer these facilities to other schools and departments on a pay-as-you-go basis.

• We are organizing summer classes at Cornell Financial Engineering Manhattan (CFEM) under the auspices of Cornell's School of Continuing Education and Summer School. These courses, which are distinct from those offered through our regular program, are likely to cover spreadsheet-based analytics, bond mathematics, and computational finance and will carry Cornell academic credit. This is an example of the outreach we strive for, and CFEM is a great enabler. Indeed, CFEM is recognized as a key component of Cornell's New York City presence.

We have exciting news at both ends of the faculty's academic career spectrum. For more depth on these stories and many others, read and/or subscribe to ORIE news. Our news pages average more than 20,000 views each month, thanks to the top-shelf efforts of Mark Eisner, our resident newshound and former M Eng Director.

• Jack Muckstadt has been named this year's only Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow, Cornell's preeminent recognition of excellence in undergraduate teaching. The award, named for the late Stephen H. Weiss '57, emeritus chair of the Cornell Board of Trustees, honors "Cornell's most accomplished and beloved professors," according to Cornell President David J. Skorton. In conveying the award, Skorton cited "your clear, logical class presentations and your use of Socratic
dialog and experiential learning to develop critical thinking skills have had an impact on generations of Cornell students." Jack, a mathematics graduate of the University of Rochester with Masters and PhD degrees from the University of Michigan, joined ORIE in 1974. He is a nationally recognized expert in supply chain logistics, with recent emphasis on the logistics of disaster response. He is a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the author, with his student Amar Sapra of the University of Florida, of the recently published Springer monograph "Principles of Inventory Management: When You are Down to Four, Order More." Muckstadt served as Director of the School from 1987 to 1996 and has consulted with dozens of corporations about their operations. With his wife Linda, he has been a generous contributor to the School's endowment, including funding for the School's computer infrastructure. Congratulations, Jack, on becoming a Weiss Fellow!

- Peter Frazier, a recent Ph.D. graduate of Princeton University, joined the ORIE faculty last fall. His research deals with optimal decision making under uncertainty using an approach called optimal learning. Optimal learning is a mathematical and computational approach that works to achieve a balance between the cost of collecting information during sequential decision making and the benefit the information contributes to the decision. Peter's work has a broad range of applications, particularly drug discovery, and he has received Honorable Mentions in both the INFORMS Computing Society Student Paper Competition and in the INFORMS Doing Good with Good OR Competition. Prior to pursuing his Ph.D. Frazier worked as a software engineer and earned two patents. He holds a BS in physics from the California Institute of Technology. His hobbies include soccer and riding a unicycle. We welcome Peter, his wife Emilee and their children Jack, Sophia and Olivia to the Cornell community.

Each year the current crop of Master of Engineering students returns to Ithaca early to work on their M.Eng. projects. This year's rich slate encompasses projects for corporations such as Xerox, Microsoft, CN Rail and the Royal Bank of Canada; medical and emergency service organizations in Ithaca, Rochester and Toronto; and the government consulting organization MITRE. In the fall semester, Financial Engineering students working at CFEM completed projects for Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank, Bloomberg, Barclays and the Cornell Investment Office. These projects are an integral part of our M.Eng. program, a key differentiator in the preparation we provide our graduate students who are headed for industry, and a fine model for outreach. Please do let us know if you have any ideas for future projects with your organization.

Nearly 300 alums have already responded to my request for alumni information, with more than half volunteering to serve as mentors to our graduate students.
Thank you! It would not take much more alumni participation to open this program to undergraduates as well. Submit information and volunteer! In addition, nearly 50 alums have submitted Notes for publication on the Alumni Notes page. Let your classmates know what you are up to.

This is the last update you'll receive from me as Interim Director. As I reported in my previous letter, Adrian Lewis becomes Director in July. The school could not be in better hands. In carrying out the responsibilities of Director I was greatly helped by a large number of folks that are too numerous to name here. But I would be remiss if I didn't explicitly thank my predecessor, Jim Renegar, the executive committee of Adrian Lewis, Sid Resnick and David Shmoys, and the Associate Directors: Les Trotter (Ph.D.), Bob Bland (undergrad), Kathryn Caggiano (M.Eng.) and her predecessor Mark Eisner.

It is so very rewarding to be a part of the wonderful enterprise that is ORIE Cornell!

Shane Henderson
607 255-9126
sgh9@cornell.edu