

1. Opening and Introductions

1. Participants greet each other and confirm attendance.
 - Example: several join by phone or reconnect after previous sessions.
 2. The group explains the format: say where they're from, where they lived freshman year, then address a starting question.
 3. The starting question for this session is: Which freshman-year professor had the greatest impact on you, and why?
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2. Influential Professors and Academic Experiences

1. One participant's influential professor:
 - He praises Uri Bronfenbrenner (CDF 115), describing inspirational lectures on sociology and child development.
 2. Another's academic challenges:
 - As an unprepared entrant into the Art & Architecture program, she struggled in studio courses and found refuge in her freshman English class.
 - She recalls a strict but excellent writing teacher whose class boosted her confidence.
 3. Large lecture experiences
 - Many recall huge lecture classes (history, physics, sociology), but also small seminars and the surprising feeling when a professor knew students by name despite large class sizes.
 4. Reading & Study Skills Program
 - A third participant describes a non-credit study-skills course that transformed her academic performance by teaching how to read and study efficiently.
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3. Social Life, Friendships, and Dorm Living

1. Dorm friendships & curfews
 - Women had curfews; these curfew gatherings created strong hall friendships as everyone sat by the lone hallway telephone talking before the nightly deadline.
 2. Dorm options
 - Freshmen lived either in dorms, sororities, or small living units. This shaped social connections.
 3. Rush/sorority recruitment
 - Rush began second semester; for many, it exposed them to more people in two weeks than the rest of their Cornell years.
 - It simultaneously broadened and narrowed social circles by creating a “family” unit while also exposing students to upper class networks.
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4. Small living units
 - Several ultimately joined small living units (e.g., Watermargin) toward the end of freshman year, providing a stable community.
 5. Friendships that endure
 - Participants note that freshman friendships remain some of the tightest in their lives, with several still in touch or living together decades later.
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4. Extracurriculars and Making a Large University Feel Small

1. Octagon theatre involvement
 - Two classmates discuss their work on productions such as *Pajama Game* and *Peter Pan*; joining Octagon introduced them to new social circles and meaningful friendships.
 2. Church, clubs, and casual networks
 - Some met people through church, student groups, or shared activities, piecing together their community from various small encounters.
 3. Navigating multiple communities
 - Participants describe moving among dorm friends, major-based communities, and social groups like fraternities/sororities, which collectively made Cornell manageable.
 4. Cultural experiences in the dorms
 - One student recalls a hall mate from Pakistan who cooked rice for girls on the floor—an example of spontaneous bonding experiences.
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5. Dress Codes, Social Rules, and Changing Norms

1. Strict dress norms for women and men
 - Women were expected to wear skirts; men sometimes wore jackets and ties even to class.
 - Participants describe “dinner dresses” kept on hooks to quickly comply with dining hall dress codes.
 2. Rapid cultural shift
 - By senior year, these expectations had evaporated; dress culture changed dramatically within four years.
 3. Curfew rebellion:
 - The Class of '72 women refused to follow curfews, leading to the rapid abolition of the policy within weeks.
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6. Historical Context and How Events Impacted Daily Life

1. Vietnam War influences
 - Arthur recalls debates over military recruiters on campus; he supported allowing recruiters even while protesting the war itself.
 2. Assassinations of MLK and Robert Kennedy
 - These events occurred at the end of freshman year; the group wants to discuss how they affected students personally.
 3. Straight Takeover (1969)
 - Recalled in connection with theatre involvement, illustrating how major events occurred simultaneously with students' daily routines.
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7. Emotional Reflections & Adult Perspective

1. Shift in priorities
 - Many remark how what seemed important at age 18 feels insignificant now—and vice versa. Priorities as older adults differ dramatically from those during college.
2. Recognition of community's value
 - Participants admit they underestimated the value of friendships and networks when young. In retrospect, these were far more important than they realized at the time.
3. Humor and nostalgia
 - Stories about bad weather gear, wearing skirts in winter, firetrap apartments on Eddy Street, and shared misadventures reflect fond recollection.