

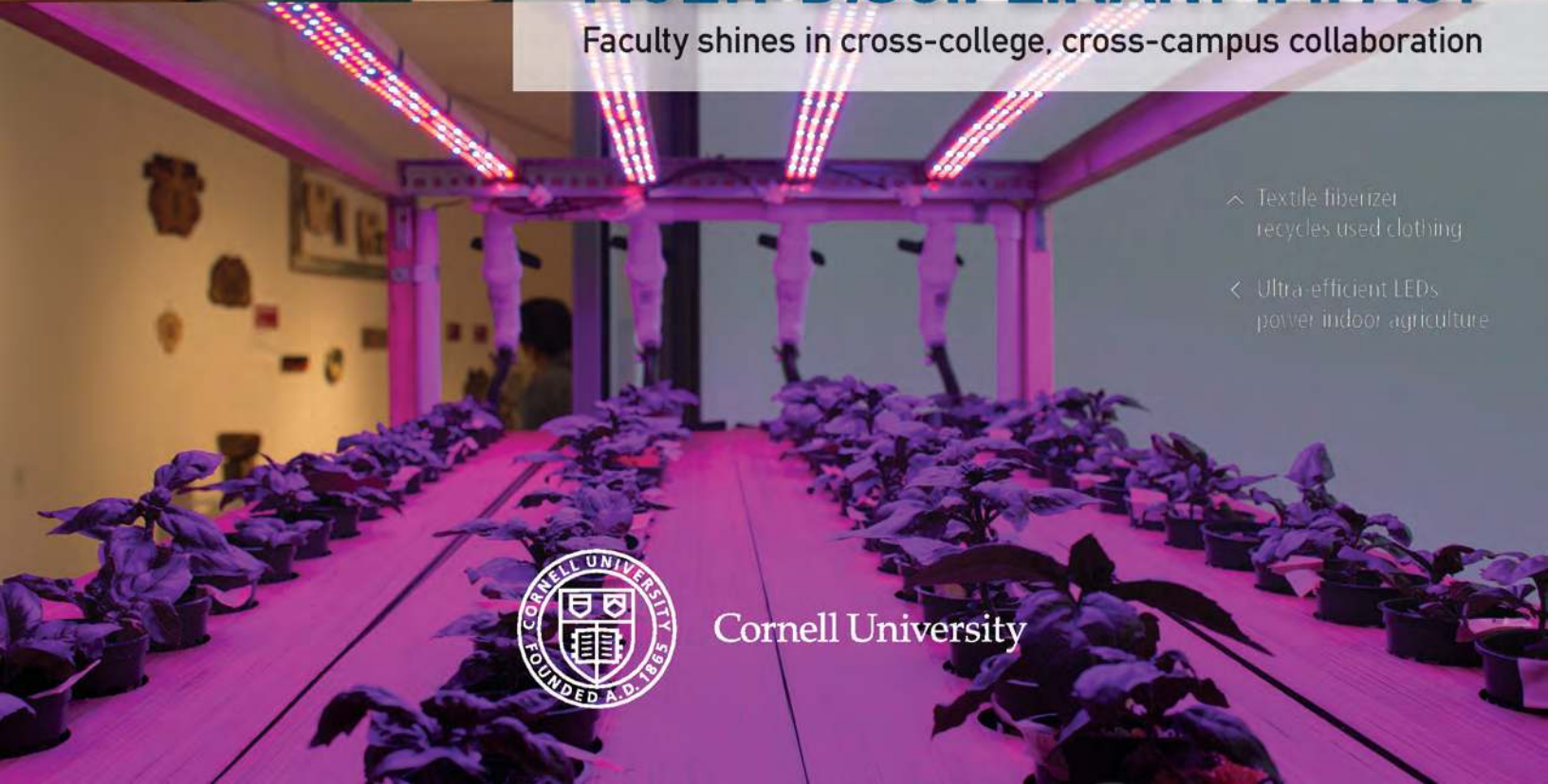
HumanEcology

COLLEGE OF HUMAN ECOLOGY · CORNELL UNIVERSITY · VOLUME 45 · NUMBER 1 · SPRING 2017



MULTI-DISCIPLINARY IMPACT

Faculty shines in cross-college, cross-campus collaboration



- ↳ Textile fiberizer recycles used clothing
- ↳ Ultra-efficient LEDs power indoor agriculture



Cornell University

Engaged LEARNING

Human Ecology faculty receive grants for research and curriculum development

Human Ecology faculty members have been awarded Engaged Cornell grants for curricular and research work that furthers the university's mission through community-engaged learning. Showcasing the breadth of the College's disciplines, the projects range from design to public health and from innovative departmental curricula to cross-disciplinary international partnerships.



Tim DeVoogd



Kate Dickin



David Erickson



Gary Evans



Rebecca Seguin



Mardelle Shepley



Jeanne Moseley



David Pelletier



Valerie Reyna



Saurabh Mehta



Nancy Wells



So-Yeon Yoon



Julia Finkelstein



Allison Hermann

Global and Public Health Partnerships

A Division of Nutritional Sciences team led by David Pelletier, Professor of Nutrition Policy, received an extension of its Engaged Curriculum Grant, intended to help faculty enrich Cornell curricula by integrating elements of community engagement.

Pelletier is working with Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition Julia Finkelstein, Lecturer Jeanne Moseley, Assistant Professor Rebecca Seguin, and Research Scientist Kate Dickin to develop domestic, sustainable, and mutually beneficial research partnerships for the new Global and Public Health Sciences (GPHS) major.

The supervised engaged learning experience connects the theory and practice of addressing public health issues and the well-being of communities. Students working with the Skorton Health Center at Cornell, for example, will participate in ongoing initiatives in mental health, alcohol and drug use, sexual violence, and hazing.

"Establishing such partnerships is a major hurdle that departments face when embarking on experiential learning," says Pelletier. "The Engaged Curriculum Grant helps us prime the pump."

Design + Environmental Analysis Applications

With an Engaged Curriculum Advancement Grant, Professor Nancy Wells, Associate Professor So-Yeon Yoon, Elizabeth Lee Vincent Professor Gary Evans, and Professor Mardelle Shepley – all in the Department

of Design + Environmental Analysis (DEA) – are expanding the Department's engaged learning programs.

"DEA has a long tradition of community-engaged projects," says Wells. "I think they bring academic content to life – literally and figuratively. They allow students to apply their knowledge to real issues."

Last year's grant supports four courses in which DEA majors explore the power of design and environment to improve people's health, functioning, and well-being. While Wells has her students conducting a health impact assessment in anticipation of the 15-month shutdown of the New York City L-Train planned for 2019, Yoon has had her Designing User Experience Studio class outline a plan to help Ithaca Community Recovery provide a warm, inspiring meeting environment for people in recovery and their families.

Local organizations will also benefit from the work Evans has planned with Tompkins County Action, where students will evaluate a Head Start Center, and Finger Lakes ReUse, where they will explore factors influencing reuse behavior.

Shepley's Health and Healing Studio course will generate designs for prefabricated building modules for school clinics in Westchester County as well as for the Cancer Resource Center in Ithaca.

Risky Decision Making Research

Student learning through community engagement is also at the heart of the

Undergraduate Engaged Research Program Grant, one of which went to Valerie Reyna, Professor of Human Development, and Allison Hermann, Research and Outreach Manager in Human Ecology.

Over the past year, four undergraduates have been conducting a study on why student athletes under-report sports-related concussions, making them vulnerable to the lifelong effects of brain damage. By interviewing coaches and 155 youth in Colorado, Minnesota, and New York, they found support for a hypothesis based in fuzzy-trace theory research: Adolescents tend to weigh pros (large benefit of playing time) and cons (small risk from a single hit), whereas adults make a "gist" decision based on their experience, concluding that the possibility of getting a concussion that could result in permanent brain damage is unacceptable.

"Our ultimate goal is to help those who work with young people implement evidence-based strategies that promote realistic risk assessments and healthy decision-making," says Reyna.

Community Health in Ecuador and Ithaca

A faculty team with expertise in public health, infectious diseases, engineering, psychology, and Latin American Studies was awarded an Undergraduate Engaged Research Program Grant to help improve community health in Ecuador.

Julia Finkelstein; Saurabh Mehta, Associate Professor of Global Health, Epidemiology, and Nutrition in the Division of Nutritional Sciences; David Erickson, Sibley College Professor in the Sibley School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; and Tim DeVoogd, Professor of Psychology, are building on an established partnership with Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL), Ecuador's premier academic institution.

Students will spend ten weeks immersed in the community to work in multi-disciplinary teams with their Ecuadorian counterparts on analyzing epidemiological data, conducting household surveys, and assisting in primary data collection.

Once the program is up and running, the faculty team hopes that it will be able to extend the opportunity to Ecuadorian students to conduct global health research at Cornell and in the Ithaca community, bringing the university's full-circle engagement back home.

– Olivia M. Hall