Human ECOLOGY

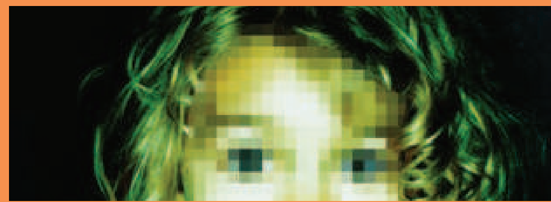
Shaping Policy Development

College of Human Ecology, Cornell University • August 2005 • Volume 33, Number 2

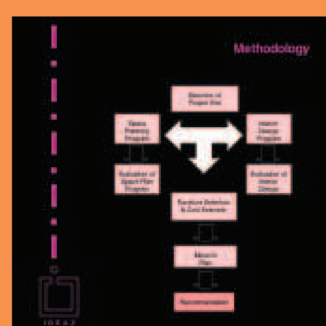
Cornell University

< FEATURES

Shaping Policy Development



What’s



Volume 33, Number 2

August 2005

The New York State College of Human Ecology at Cornell University

Lisa Staiano-Coico, Ph.D.
Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean

Cornell’s College of Human Ecology publishes this magazine to illustrate how its programs address complex societal issues to improve the human condition. This mission of human improvement is accomplished through faculty initiatives in research, outreach, and teaching—with an emphasis on an ecological perspective, collaborative projects, and multidisciplinary curricula within and across five academic units: the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis; the Department of Human Development; the Department of Policy Analysis and Management; the Department of Textiles and Apparel; and the Division of Nutritional Sciences, a unit shared with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The college includes the Family Life Development Center, Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center, and the Cornell Institute for Policy Research.

ISSN 1530-7069. Published by the New York State College of Human Ecology. Third-class postage paid at Ithaca, NY.

Printed in U.S.A.

Produced by Office of Publications and Marketing at Cornell University

Editor: Elizabeth Bauman

Designer: Judy Burns

Contributing Writers: Susan Lang, Roger Segelken, Clare Ulrich, Metta Winter

Photography: Fotosearch; Robert Barker, Cornell University Photography

Production Coordinator: Donna Vantine

Change of Address: To assure uninterrupted delivery, write to Cornell University, College of Human Ecology, Box HE, Ithaca, NY 14853-4401 (e-mail: gla2@cornell.edu) a month in advance of your move and provide old and new addresses. Annual subscriptions for two issues plus one bonus issue: $20 a year. International, $26. Canada, $24. Write to Cornell University, College of Human Ecology, Box HE, Ithaca, NY 14853-4401. Allow six weeks for subscription fulfillment. Back issues: $10.

8/05 4.2M CR 050387

Shaping Policy Development

There are many colleges across the United States whose faculty expertise and degree offerings could easily fall under the umbrella of Human Ecology. These same colleges offer innovative methods of teaching, breaking research findings, and community collaborations. So what makes the College of Human Ecology stand apart from these other institutions? It is our practice of taking knowledge one step further. That next step is action.

By bringing our research findings and outreach experiences directly to local, state, and federal legislators, the College of Human Ecology is able to effect lasting change. We collaborate with Cornell Cooperative Extension to apply research to local issues. We help to reduce poverty and hunger. We help shape the development of policies that affect children and their families. We provide better guidelines for pharmaceutical labeling and distribution. Our faculty works to ensure that emergency workers and those exposed to hazardous materials will have adequate protective clothing. And the courtroom testimony of children may be handled more appropriately, thanks in large part to the research of one of our faculty members. This is just the beginning.

Our college is about bettering the human experience. We know that this means so much more than simply conducting research, teaching a class, or designing an extension program. This means seeing a project through from the initial identification of a problem to the eventual solution. Much of this involves working to inform legislation and other policies that will provide those solutions. The College of Human Ecology is up to that challenge, and we are proud to be a force for positive change within New York State and beyond its borders.

Lisa Staiano-Coico

LISA STAIANO-COICO, PH.D.
Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean

inside . . .

For more than 25 years, **Stephen Ceci** has probed the accuracy of testimony given by children. His credibility as a researcher enables him to have a great impact on how judges perceive the information garnered by court interviewers and investigators.

Ceci Shapes Judicial Policy on Testimony of Children

BY METTA WINTER

When Stephen J. Ceci addresses members of the Family Law Association, he knows at least one thing most likely to be said about him.

"Judges who introduce me almost always say to the audience, 'I'll save you the bother of putting Dr. Ceci in your Rolodex; he isn't for hire,'" says the Helen L. Carr Professor of Developmental Psychology in the Department of Human Development, who has turned down more than 1,000 offers from organizations as big as the Boy Scouts of America, the YMCA, and the Catholic Church and celebrities as high profile as Woody Allen and Michael Jackson.

Why does Ceci refuse to be an expert witness? Because, he says, he learned early on that the adversarial atmosphere of the courtroom isn't the best venue for conveying science. And in steadfastly refusing to profit from his work, Ceci has gained the respect of judges across North America and Europe. They cite his publications in their decisions and invite him back again and again to give talks or seminars based on the latest research in children's testimonial competence and accuracy.

"Judges are understandably very wary of people who may have an alternative motive, so I never testify for either side," Ceci says, by way of explaining one of the reasons why—during the past 27 years—he has had such an impact on judicial policy.

Instead, Ceci offers the latest research findings from studies conducted in his own laboratory and those of other scientists—most notably his frequent collaborator Maggie Bruck, a professor of child and adolescent psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine—to illuminate the issues that arise when law enforcement officers, social workers, court-appointed evaluators, lawyers, and judges deal with the testimony of children.

Misconceptions abound. Ceci's goal is to convey what the science shows about, for example, the way that children disclose whether they have been abused.

For more than 20 years, a group of beliefs that has come to be called the Child Sex Abuse Accommodation Syndrome (CSAAS) has been accepted as true. The CSAAS posits that when children are abused, they delay reporting it—sometimes for decades. When they are asked directly, they will deny any abuse has occurred; yet after repeated questioning, they gradually begin to give fragmentary disclosures, little bits and pieces about how they were abused. Next, they recant altogether. Only later, when they are in what is perceived to be a psychologically safe situation, do they give a full and elaborate disclosure.

The CSAAS is routinely used by expert witnesses for both the defense and the prosecution.

"So the first thing I tell judges is that neither side is right, that the CSAAS doesn't accurately capture the way abused kids disclose what happened to them," Ceci says. In analyses of dozens of published studies, Ceci, Bruck, and Kamala London of Johns Hopkins University separated out the methodologically sound studies on children's mode of disclosure from the abundance of poorly conducted ones and found that the only part of the CSAAS that is valid is that abused children typically deny any abuse has occurred when first questioned. The high-quality studies showed that children (even into adulthood) delay reporting what happened to them. And while it is true that children don't tend to spontaneously tell of their abuse, data show that the vast majority do tell, in full detail, when explicitly asked.

"It's important for judges to know what science shows, because this set of invalid beliefs animates the whole investigatory process," Ceci points out. "It motivates investigators and interviewers to pursue reluctant children, who may be reluctant because nothing actually happened." > > >

Social workers and police officers who hold to the beliefs of the CSAAS will continue to question a child who, when asked directly, denies being abused. After repeated questioning, when the child then begins to give fragmentary disclosures, the interviewer determines this behavior to be consistent with CSAAS theory. Then, when a mother or grandmother asks the child and they recant, this denial is additionally seen as consistent with child sex abuse.

"In actuality, what it is consistent with is the child being badgered so often that he or she finally relents and tells the person what the child thinks the person wants to hear to get out of an uncomfortable interview situation," Ceci explains.

Demonstrating that the CSAAS does not hold up under rigorous scientific scrutiny was the first of three points that Ceci made in a webcast aired in April of 2005 to an audience of New York State judges as part of the New York State Judicial Institute's continuing education programming. Video streaming is the latest forum to bring Ceci and practitioners together.

The second misconception he corrected in the webcast was a common way that judges evaluate the veracity of an interview: by looking for whether the interviewer has asked leading questions.

"They think that the absence of leading questions indicates a good interview, whereas the presence of leading questions indicates a bad interview," Ceci explains.

Instead, judges should be looking at the interviewer's attitude. It is simple, Ceci says, to detect interviewer bias. A biased interviewer has a preordained belief about what happened to the child and conducts the interview to confirm this belief. Such an interviewer will reinforce the child for information consistent with this belief and ignore or even punish the child for information contrary to it. A fair-minded interviewer, however, can do a very fine job, even if he or she asks occasional leading questions, as long as the interviewer is listening to what the child is saying and from that generating some plausible alternative hypotheses.

"Judges resonate with this because they see this kind of thing in their courtroom all the time," Ceci says. "I show them how we do controlled experiments that demonstrate how a biased interviewer can ask very few suggestive questions and yet do a very bad interview, while a very fine interview can still contain leading questions."

The third point in the webcast focused on the infallibility of memory—not only the child's memory but the interviewer's memory as well.

Ceci presents data from studies done in his laboratory and elsewhere, in which experienced interviewers are videotaped questioning children. In comparing the videotape with the interviewer's description of what happened, it becomes apparent that even 20 minutes after an interview is concluded, the interviewer can't remember details of what transpired. The interviewer often can remember the bottom line but has no recollection of the give and take of the interview—hence whether something was freely reported by the child or was the outcome of a series of highly leading questions at first met with denials, then finally with assent. In other instances, the interviewer reverses what he or she said with what the child said.

Ceci advises judges to insist on electronically recorded interviews and then listen for themselves to how the interviewer got from point A to point B.

Nothing is more eye-opening to judges than when Ceci uses examples taken from actual court cases such as audiotaped therapy sessions. The transcriptions make clear that what the psychiatrist testified to in court is not what the child had said during therapy.

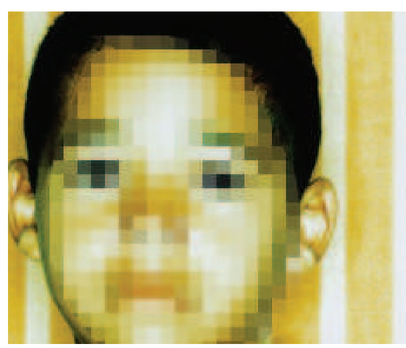
"The therapist wasn't lying; she provided those tapes to the court in good faith. She had just forgotten exactly what she had said and exactly how the child had responded," Ceci says.

Ceci's credibility as a research scientist is another reason he has been so influential in shaping policy regarding children's testimonial competence and accuracy. For the first third of his career, Ceci conducted purely theoretical research and published his results for a scientific audience. From the beginning, Ceci's papers were accepted by the most rigorously peer-reviewed journals. His studies have appeared in *Psychological Bulletin*, *Developmental Review*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *Psychological Review*, and *American Psychologist*, among many others.

Over time, such premier journals have also accepted his papers about applied research of judicial relevance, thus conferring not only credibility but visibility as well.

One article alone, "The Suggestibility of Children's Recollections: A Historical Review and Synthesis," co-authored with Maggie Bruck and published in *Psychological Bulletin* in 1993 has been cited nearly 500 times in other scientific articles.

The influence of Ceci's thinking on other scientists' work is evidenced by the more than 4,500 citations of his writings in other books and journal articles. Between 400 and 500 new citations of his work appear each year. Such productivity is possible because Ceci's laboratory attracts top talent—accepting typically a dozen doctoral and post-doctoral students at any one time. To prepare them for the job market, Ceci tries to publish one or more articles with each of them.



"For graduate students interested in this field, Cornell is the first place they think to apply because we are so well known," Ceci explains. "Consequently, I have the good fortune of working with many creative, very smart young people."

The volume of e-mails Ceci gets asking for help is a big motivator to conscientious graduate students. Nearly every day, Ceci's in-box brings yet another anguished tale: one from a pediatrician charged with misconduct while evaluating elementary school children, another from the mother of an incarcerated child molester desperate to clear her son's name. (Ceci's administrative assistant keeps a list of expert witnesses across the country to offer to all who ask.)

Ideas for dissertation studies can also be sparked by a steady stream of requests for help from professionals on the front line: judges, social workers, lawyers, and law enforcement officials.

"We always try to respond," Ceci says. "First we ask ourselves what science already knows about X, then what kind of study would be needed to find out more."

Two recent examples show how Ceci's scholarship has had far-reaching effects on judicial procedure and policy. In *U.S. v. Desmond Rouse* decided before the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit (the court directly beneath the Supreme Court), Ceci's and Bruck's work is relied upon almost exclusively in establishing new case law. Heavy quotations from their book *Jeopardy in the Courtroom: A Scientific Analysis of Children's Testimony* run for pages. And on the state level, their research recently was cited in *John Delbridge v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* to establish a wholly new procedure for vetting children's testimony.

Ceci's influence on judicial thinking about child witnesses also has been widely recognized by his peers. In 2003, he was awarded the American Psychological Association's Award for Lifetime Contribution to the Scientific Application of Psychology. This spring, he was given the James McKeen Cattell Award "for a lifetime of outstanding contributions to the area of psychological research whose research addresses a critical problem in society at large" by the American Psychological Society (APS). Thus, Ceci recently has received the highest honors of the world's two largest psychological societies.

"His studies of children's suggestibility with Johns Hopkins' psychologist Maggie Bruck are an elegant integration of cognitive, social, and biological processes and have been cited by courts at all levels," reads part of the APS announcement about Ceci receiving the James McKeen Cattell Award.

APS past president Frank H. Farley has noted, "I believe Ceci's work is having more salutary impact on pressing social and legal issues than almost any in our field."

The field of children's memory and the testimonial reliability of young children is constantly evolving, spawning large numbers of published studies.

"Nearly every month, findings appear that are intriguing, provocative, and controversial," Ceci says, referring most recently to a study showing certain ploys that seem to increase by 10 percent an interviewer's chance of detecting children who are lying.

"So," says Ceci, "it's very exciting when my students and I get together to try to figure out how we could design the definitive study to verify this."

more information?

Stephen J. Ceci
Cornell University
Department of Human Development
G39 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-4401

607-255-0828
sjc9@cornell.edu

Seminars Presented for State Commissioners

Under the auspices of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), Human Ecology faculty members have now met four times with commissioners of New York state agencies to share research-based knowledge generated in the college.

What have come to be called the State Issues Seminars were born during a conversation among Brian Wing, the former commissioner of OTDA, then-dean of the College of Human Ecology Patsy Brannon, and **Stephen F. Hamilton**, the co-director of the college's Family Life Development Center and Cornell's associate provost for outreach.

"Brian suggested that to be most effective in changing public policy, we needed to talk to people at the commissioner level," Hamilton recalls. "It took a nanosecond for us to say, 'It's done.'"

The first seminar, held in Ithaca on June 24, 2003, presented a smorgasbord of research on topics pertaining to youth development and child care. The faculty presenters were Hamilton and **H. Elizabeth Peters**, a professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management.

Topics of the other three seminars were the earned income tax credit, obesity, and evaluation methods. Those topics were chosen collaboratively with OTDA staff, who identified areas of greatest interest to the commissioners and senior staff of agencies including the Office of Children and Family Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Health, and the interagency New York State Council on Children and Families. More seminars are slated for the coming months.

"Interacting on a regular basis with agency commissioners is an ideal way for us to learn about the issues they are grappling with, so that we can target new research more effectively," Hamilton says. One outcome so far is the study of child-only cases, co-directed by Rachel Dunifon, an assistant professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management, and Mary Agnes Hamilton, a senior research associate in the Family Life Development Center. The study examined welfare recipients who are minors whose parent is ineligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (because of foreign citizenship, incarceration, abandonment, or because the parent is disabled and receiving Social Security), and queried 16- and 17-year-olds about their plans once benefits are terminated at age 18.

Stephen Hamilton also helped form the Youth Development Team, a multiagency body that meets to discuss issues of young people's development and advise state agencies on how best to assist children, teens, and young adults.

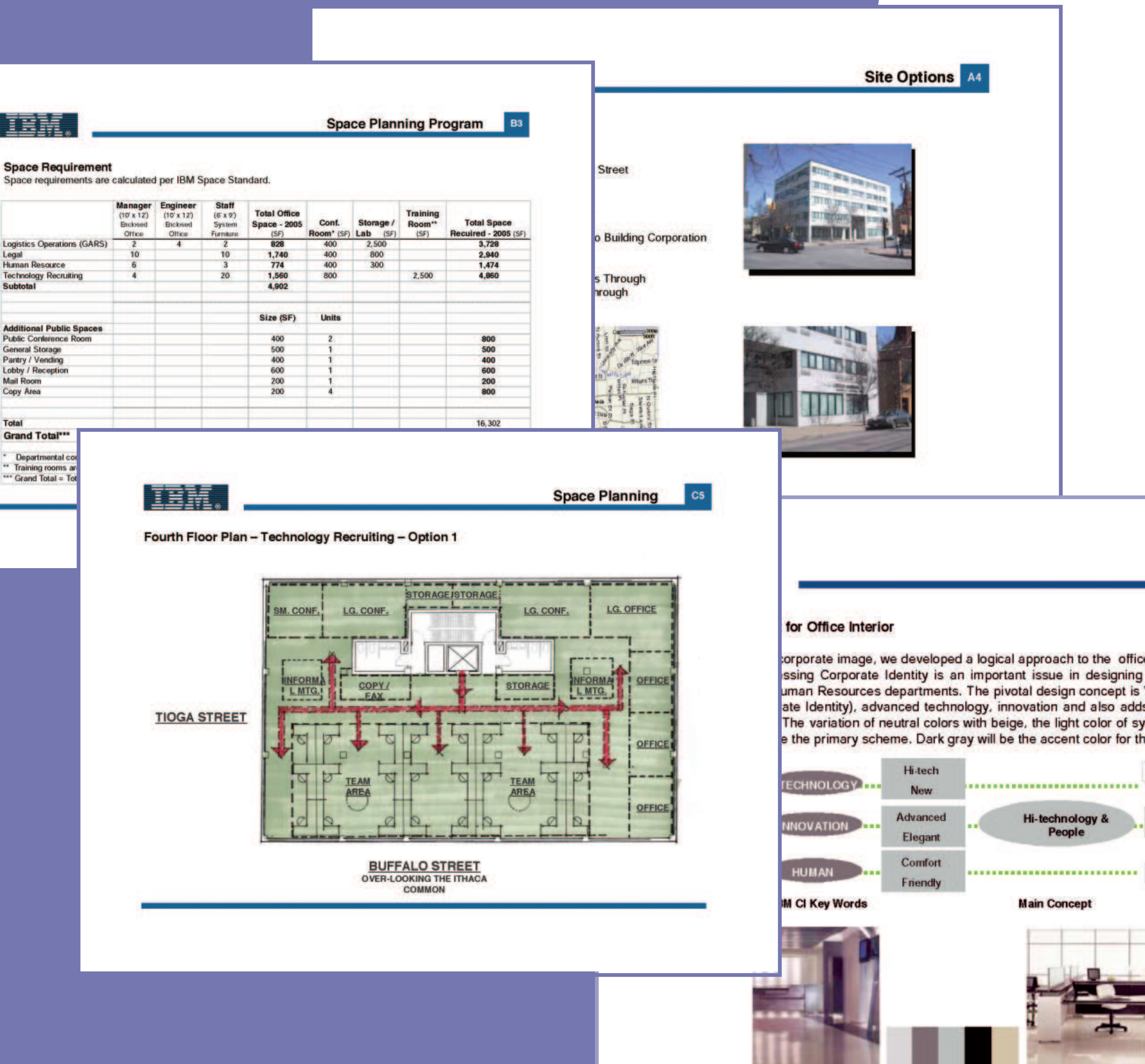
"Most state and federal youth programs are funded to combat specific problems—drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and so on," Hamilton explains. "The team wants to turn this around and encourage agencies to use a program approach that doesn't simply target at-risk youth or specific problems but rather promotes thriving for all young people."

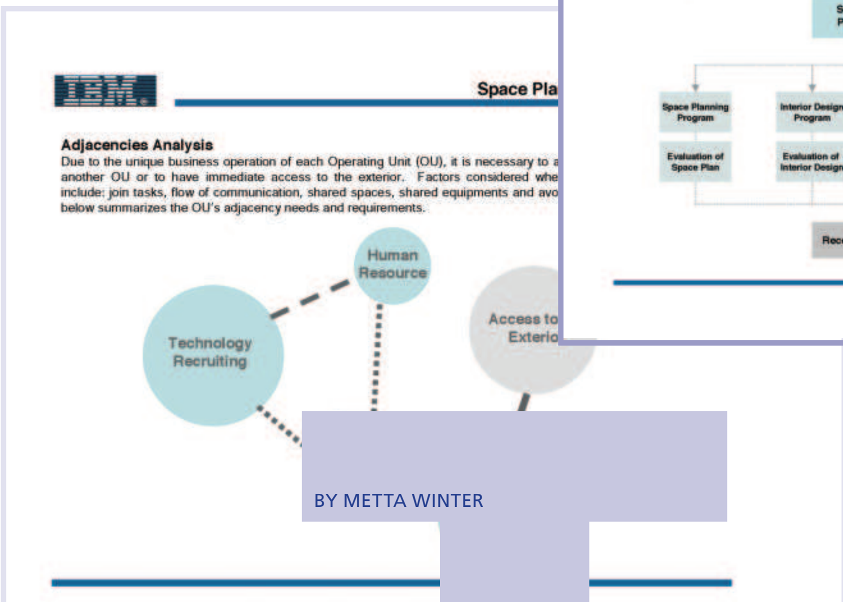
The Family Life Development Center provides research-based expertise, and staff members have written publications such as *The Handbook of Youth Development,* assisting agency staff interested in learning more about how to design programs using a youth development approach.

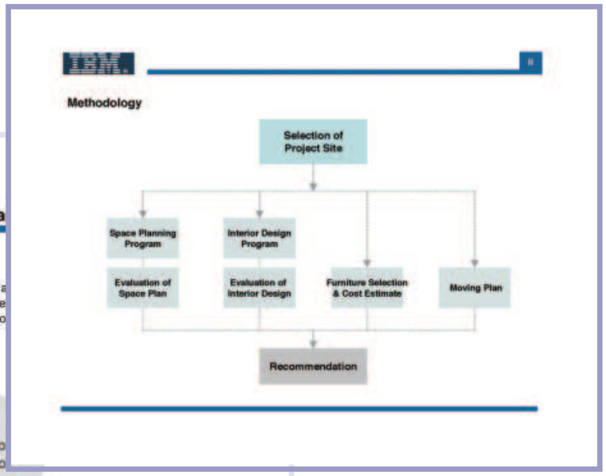
METTA WINTER

In the studio course Facility Planning and Management taught by **William Sims**, students work in teams to advise companies on relocation and optimal use of space.

Students Become Facility Strategists in Simulations with Real Companies







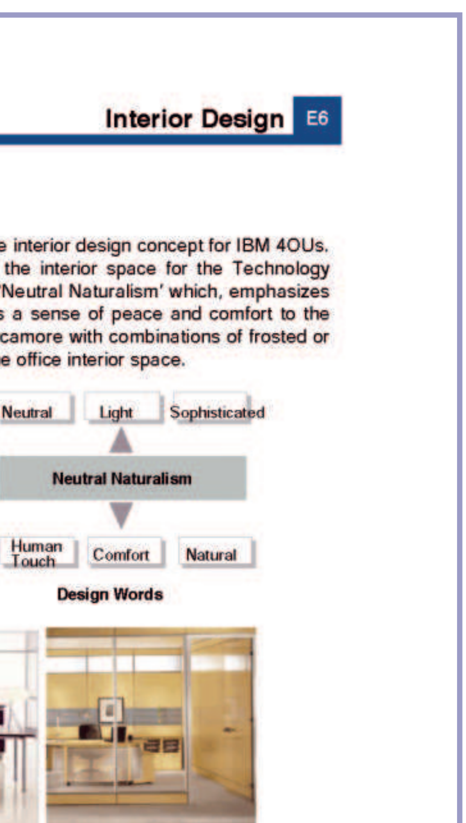
BY METTA WINTER

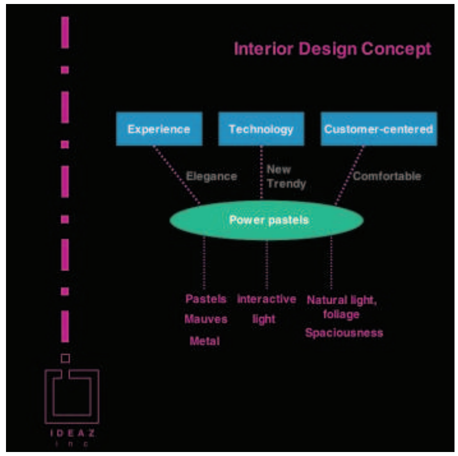
Two decades ago when IBM was in fiscal trouble, the first thing the company did was eliminate the employee policy "IBM for Life," then it downsized the workforce. A second round of layoffs was planned when facilities management executives offered first to see how much cost they could "wring out" of the bricks and mortar. They found a lot of ways to cut expenses. Jobs were saved. IBM returned to a more firm financial footing. And some of the highly imaginative innovations—such as hoteling, whereby a small number of luxurious offices are shared for brief periods by a large number of sales representatives—have become standard cost savers in America's largest corporations.

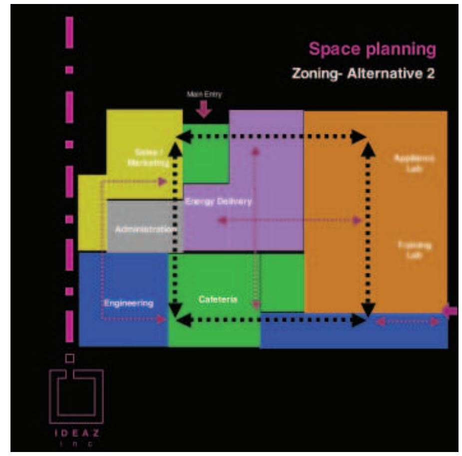
It's a success story William Sims likes to tell. Sims's goal in the Facility Planning and Management Program's capstone studio course, DEA 454, is to teach young men and women to become effective strategists like those at IBM—executives who know how to manage facilities to attain large organizations' business goals. Facilities represent the second largest cost of doing business, after personnel, and have far-reaching effects on individual and organizational performance. Companies can't compete, Sims says, without strategically conceived, implemented, and managed physical facilities.

"Any time a company institutes a new policy—be it saving money, narrowing the cycle time for producing a new product, or enhancing employee satisfaction and performance—it has to simultaneously reorganize the facilities to support that policy, or people will just gradually drift back into the old patterns," says Sims, a professor in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, who has taught DEA 454 for 25 years.

As an example, Sims points to the role facilities played in transforming the American auto industry from a relay model into a team-based production system. Prior to the 1980s, American cars were produced by a succession of specialized workers who, once they completed their tasks, handed off the project like runners hand off a baton in a relay. Designers passed their ideas on to engineers, who engineered the product; they passed it on to manufacturing people, who built it; and they passed it on to marketing people, who tried to sell it, often unsuccessfully. > > >







"The Japanese were killing us," Sims recalls. "We had a product cycle time of seven to eight years to manufacture a new car that was poorly designed, poorly engineered, poorly manufactured, and wasn't targeted toward customer needs; it was a disaster."

Major facilities changes were central to achieving collaborative production that had been deemed essential to reviving the industry. Sims points out that in American companies at that time, space was organized to support individual work, with 90 percent of the work space typically allotted to individual offices and 10 percent devoted to a few conference rooms and other common areas. Teams, however, need a blend of very small spaces in which individuals can "hole up" and do individual tasks as well as large flexible project rooms where team members can spontaneously come together to work collaboratively on a project. Unlike conference rooms, project rooms are dedicated to the team for as long as the individuals work together; their plans or drawings are put on the walls and other work items stay put. As the size of the team expands or contracts as the project moves along, the size of the room should change accordingly.

In addition, the way people walk through the building to get to these team and individual spaces plays an important role in how much employees are likely to share information and thereby promote ongoing collaboration.

"Most learning in organizations doesn't come about through formal training or textbook learning but rather through informal exchanges of information with colleagues," Sims explains. "Creating circulation systems that increase the probability of chance encounters with people promotes those '30-second meetings' in which a lot of work gets done."

Sims's students in DEA 454—juniors and first-year graduate students—evaluated this kind of relationship between company policies and its facilities in four "realistic but not real" simulations. Groups of three or four students form facilities management consulting firms to advise real companies. Over the years, Sims's students have worked with representatives of many companies including IBM, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Raytheon Corporation. Each student team is assigned to one company.

The three companies who participated in spring 2005 were (1) Corning Incorporated, one of the world's top makers of fiber-optic cable with major business segments in display technologies, environmental technologies, and the life sciences; (2) Lockheed Martin, the world's largest defense contractor, which makes everything from jet fighters and submarine warfare systems to surveillance satellites; and (3) New York State Electric and Gas, a utility that serves nearly 850,000 electricity customers and more than 250,000 natural gas customers in upstate New York.

In phase one, the three student teams visited representatives of the companies in their nearby offices in Corning (Corning Incorporated), Owego (Lockheed Martin), or Binghamton (NYSEG) to familiarize themselves with the companies' organizational structures, goals and objectives, and facility management functions. The aim in this phase was for each team to recommend how a reallocation of facilities could better promote the company's stated policies.

In phase two, each team created a plan for relocating five or six of the company's operating units. In phase three, each team chose the best site for the relocation. And in phase four, the students designed the space inside a building (from drawing floor plans to costing out the furnishings for an individual work space) and created a 12-step logistical plan for managing the move.

To execute each of the four phases successfully, students had to master the tools that facilities professionals use. Among those are a building fit analysis that shows how buildings perform on a set of key business objectives and the company's operating style; an adjacency analysis that shows how much interaction exists between units, hence how closely they must be located to one another; a site analysis containing 15 variables; and a net present value analysis that compares the costs and benefits between buying an existing building, leasing space in an existing one, or buying land to build a new facility.

"The outcome of blending data from these complex analyses sometimes surprises students, because it can show that a particular building option is the best one even though it isn't the cheapest if it achieves the adjacencies that are needed, meets other key business objectives like attracting and retaining critical employees, and offers the most space efficiency and expansion potential," Sims explains.

The student teams based their conclusions on the actual real estate market; Sims had real estate information on 30 to 40 buildings in the Ithaca area. In the space-planning phase, the teams had to fit their designs within the footprint of a specific building in Cornell's Business and Technology Park.

At the completion of each phase, students created a professional-quality report, just as a consulting company would do. The reports are put online for current classmates and kept there several years for future students. The spiral-bound reports, which are between 45 and 70 pages long, are impressive. Printed in color, they contain explanatory text highlighted by bar graphs, pie charts, spread sheets comparing up to 15 variables, elevations, floor plans, and photographs showing the before and after of buildings and their interiors.

In addition, each team made an oral presentation after the completion of each phase, illustrated with PowerPoint slides, before a group comprising all the representatives from the semester's collaborating corporations. Everyone—from corporate "clients" to classmates—offered constructive criticism.

"It's amazing the transformation from the first presentation to the last," Sims says. "The students go from halting and slightly fearful to quite confident and professional." The reports and presentations make an outstanding portfolio that students then use to secure high-quality summer internships immediately after they take the course. During the internships, they often are given a significant amount of responsibility on a real relocation project.

While out in the working world, Sims's students sometimes meet resistance from corporate executives who question the practicality of their suggestions. That's fitting, Sims says, because he wants his students to realize how far out on the cutting edge the program is.

"From the beginning, we've been leaders in developing innovative ideas that are two to five years ahead of their time," Sims explains.

Take hoteling as an example. The original research behind this office space allocation system that saved IBM so much money was conducted in the College of Human Ecology. When it was first proposed to the field's trade organization, the International Facilities Management Association, attendees argued that hoteling wasn't practical. Today, hoteling is a mainstay that saves companies not only hundreds of thousands of dollars annually but also enhances employee performance and job satisfaction.

"Our graduates are known for their ability to think and work strategically, to implement forward-thinking ideas," Sims says with no small amount of pride. And, he points out, they are snapped up by America's leading corporations as soon as they graduate.

more information?

William Sims
Cornell University
Department of Design and Environmental Analysis
E214 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-4401

607-255-1954
wrs4@cornell.edu

Elder Housing: Personalized Nooks Bolster Well-Being

What people want—whether they are elderly or not—is their own home, **Paul Eshelman** told lawmakers last May in a New York State Assembly roundtable* titled "Preparing for the Future Elderly." If people can't age in their own home, then it makes a big difference to their emotional well-being and self-esteem to live somewhere that can be made to feel like home.

How is such an environment created? The "homey" touches—soft curtains, wood trim, domestic-style light fixtures—so popular these days in assisted living and nursing facilities can't accomplish this. Interior spaces need to be designed intentionally to create a personalized sense of place, giving an individual the feeling of being in his or her own unique home, explained Eshelman, a professor in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, in his talk, "How Design Characteristics Influence Residential Satisfaction among the Elderly."

"Most housing for the elderly is based on a medical model in which people live in cubes, where the furniture lines the perimeter, photos are taped to the walls, possessions teeter on window sills—nothing seems to belong," says Eshelman, an expert in how design can enhance the functioning of special populations including the elderly, ill, injured, and developmentally or otherwise disabled.

The challenge for interior designers is to create spaces that celebrate personal possessions. One of the ways that can be done is by making niches in which prized furniture, musical instruments, collections, or memorabilia can be proudly displayed. Picture molding on the walls makes grouping pictures easier. Lighting should enhance residents' ability to see and enjoy those objects.

While safety and functionality are fundamental requirements in housing for the elderly, "feeling" aspects matter, too, Eshelman demonstrated in a study reported in 2002 in the *Journal of Interior Design.* In the article, "Home Again: Environmental Predictors of Place Attachment and Self-Esteem for New Retirement Community Residents," Eshelman and department colleague Gary Evans reported their examination of environmental features, ranging from those considered highly functional to those entirely meaning related.

"Our analysis showed a statistically significant difference in how much the meaning-giving attributes fostered place attachment and thereby elevated self-esteem," Eshelman says. "Designers of senior citizens' facilities need to think of ways that interiors support the expression of each resident's individuality."

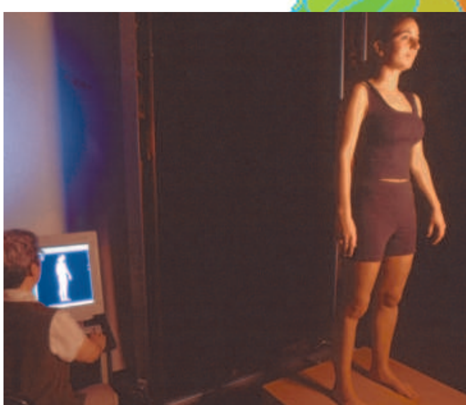
METTA WINTER

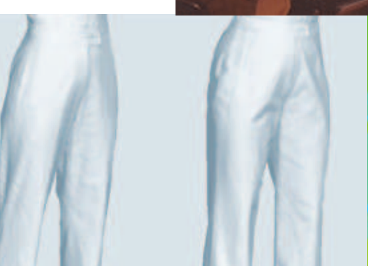
*Roundtable participants were assembly members and committee chairs including Joan L. Millman of the Legislative Commission on Government Administration, Steve Englebright of the Committee on Aging, Kevin Cahill of the Legislative Task Force on People with Disabilities, David Gantt of the Committee on Transportation, and Jeff Klein of the Committee on Oversight, Analysis, and Investigation.

Susan Ashdown's body-scanning technology is positioning the industry to design better-fitting apparel for larger consumers and more functional clothing for police officers, pesticide applicators, and even astronauts.

Body Scans

Getting the Best Fit and Function





BY ROGER SEGELKEN

In the apparel industry, a business where the bottom line depends on knowing the size of the human body, Associate Professor of Textiles and Apparel Susan Ashdown has a point—300,000 data points, actually—to make.

"Anthropometric 3-D body scans take 12 seconds and produce about 300,000 bits of information that define our size and shape," Ashdown says of a futuristic technology her laboratory helps to advance.

"Scans of hundreds of people of various sizes, shapes, ages, and ethnicities increase the number and accuracy of measurements used in size prediction," adds Ashdown, the co-leader (along with Suzanne Loker, the J. Thomas Clark Professor of Entrepreneurship, also in the Department of Textiles and Apparel) of the Cornell Body Scan Research Group. "A process that combines objective fit information with fit preference can be industry's most realistic way of satisfying customers."

America's current obesity "epidemic" is posing new challenges and opportunities for the apparel industry, Ashdown observes. "Plus-size clothing has been recognized as a new market opportunity because there has been a lack of well-fitted, attractive clothing for larger women. The goal of the industry is to satisfy the needs of all women," she says, "but this is easier with ready-to-wear sizing when there is not such a wide range of variation among people in the population."

Some manufacturers resort to flattery, with an unstated policy of "vanity sizing" and adding extra material to make women think they still fit into a fondly remembered, smaller dress size. (The approach also works on men with the "hidden inch" waistband that allows growing gentlemen to say, "I still wear a 38 waist.") Ashdown knows why vanity sizing works so well: "Many women find their dress size to be a powerful measure of self esteem," she says. "They feel more comfortable with the size label they are used to, irregardless of the actual measurements of the garment."

The resulting confusion in size designations could be resolved by labeling women's clothing with actual body dimensions, as is done with blue jean sizes labeled with waist and inseam measurements, according to Ashdown. "Apparel companies that believe their sizing gives them a competitive advantage maintain that women do not want to see their body measurements on a hang tag. But surveys show that many women would prefer this to the current guessing game about sizes."

Will the time ever come when the traditional system of women's dress sizes will be meaningless and the more detailed specifications from a body scan will be confidential information between the consumer and her dressmaker? Ashdown predicts a mix of different sizing strategies in the future. When custom apparel is manufactured from scan data (such as the men's suits currently made by Brooks Brothers), then ready-to-wear sizing designations will become irrelevant, she predicts. If this system is totally automated, then only the computer will have the actual body measurements. However, it is unlikely that we will ever totally eliminate ready-to-wear clothing with some method of size designation.

Looking good in clothes that fit will always be important, but now Ashdown also is applying the anthropometric body scan technology to clothing with an even more important purpose: protecting health and well-being. Here, functionality is critical.

"The scanners are designed to create 3-D images of people posing in what we call the modified anthropometric position—standing with the legs slightly apart and the arms away from the body," she reports. "We do not stand this way normally, and we need to move many different ways in our clothing. An agricultural worker applying pesticides has to reach and stretch in a chemical-resistant suit. A police officer in a bulletproof vest has to get out of the patrol car and run down an alleyway. A firefighter has to climb a ladder to crawl through the window of a burning building."

Accounting for range of motion in a variety of work situations will be a challenge for anthropometric body scanning, but Ashdown is confident the technology can be adapted. A study is already in the planning stage to improve the design of functional protective clothing for pesticide applicators, a project in collaboration with faculty from other universities across the country. A newly acquired, portable body scanner will supplement the stationary device, which is installed in a Martha Van Rensselaer Hall laboratory, and will permit scans to be taken in workplace environments.

Next, Ashdown will address what she calls the ultimate protection problem: spacesuits for NASA astronauts. She will use a sabbatical leave to work at a NASA laboratory on new applications of anthropometric body scanning.

"Astronauts come in more shapes and sizes these days," she says, noting that some international participants in the American space program would have trouble functioning in John Glenn's old spacesuit. Ashdown and anthropometrics will make sure tomorrow's astronauts have the right fit.

●●●

Ashdown's early work was supported by a USDA Hatch grant awarded by the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station.

more information?

Susan Ashdown
Cornell University
Department of Textiles and Apparel
327 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-4401

607-255-1929
spa4@cornell.edu

Rosemary Avery and her students are examining the content and target audiences of ads over the last 20 years.

Project Chronicles Pharmaceutical and Tobacco Advertising in Magazines

BY ROGER SEGELKEN

n one of the most comprehensive studies of its kind, researchers and students in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management are chronicling 20 years' of tobacco and pharmaceutical advertising from the most popular American magazines.

The study, initially funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Cancer Institute, was designed to document the frequency of occurrence of tobacco advertising and smoking-cessation ads in those magazines, and to determine the impact of exposure to those ads on individuals' decisions to quit smoking. "Because of the high cost of searching through the magazines and scanning the ads, we decided to collect pharmaceutical advertising in addition to ads for tobacco and anti-smoking products," explains Policy Analysis and Management Professor Rosemary Avery, one of the project leaders.

> **"We want to see if the tobacco companies are meeting the letter of the law in terms of disclosure requirements."**
>
> Professor Rosemary Avery

Read the small print.

Ads from the 27 most-read U.S. magazines were obtained from Cornell University libraries, then scanned into digital files, and stored on laptop computers. When Avery's students are finished with their data collection in all of the ads, the results will occupy 1 terabyte (one trillion bytes) of computer memory.

Working from a lab in Martha Van Rensselaer Hall and trained in content-coding skills, teams of 12 to 23 students take note of things most casual readers would miss. For example: How are the required warnings of health effects included in tobacco ads? And now that cigarette companies are required to advertise the availability of ways to quit smoking—as one result of the tobacco legal settlements—how is that information conveyed? "Certainly, the act of quitting smoking will never be as fun-filled and glamorous as smoking is portrayed to be in cigarette advertisements. We want to see if the tobacco companies are meeting the letter of the law in terms of disclosure requirements," Avery says.

Tatiana Bachniak, one of the undergraduate research team leaders, says the content coding "starts with the basics," then examines more subjective factors, "like whether the ad is sexy, macho, humorous and witty, or dry and informative." Some advertisements, she notes, depict smokers participating in activities that are thrilling and exciting; other smokers appear to be more passively engaged in scenic, natural environments. > > >

. . . you don't just feel better, you are better. And better

PhotoDisc


Here's an overactive bladder treatme
you can stick with
You should not use if you have certain types of stomach, urinary, or glaucoma problems.
Pleasure to burn
Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide.
Not all allergy medicines work the same way
Side effects may include headache, ear infection, sore throat, and upper respiratory infection
is better.

Use as directed, take one lozenge, every 1–2 hours. Individual results may vary. Support program improves chances of success.

And even "the basics," such as the Surgeon General's warnings and listings of tar and nicotine levels can vary greatly, the Human Ecology graduate has learned. Because tobacco companies are given some latitude, a Surgeon General's warning might be quite specific: "Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy." Or it might be vague: "Quitting smoking now greatly reduces serious risks to your health."

Listing of tar and nicotine levels is not required by law, but when they appear in ads, the student researchers take note. Tiny print in one ad stated, "17 mg tar, 1.3 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by the FTC method. The amount of tar and nicotine you get from this product varies depending on how you smoke it. There is no such thing as a safe cigarette." Then, it offered more information at a company web site. Whereas another brand's ad never mentioned tar and nicotine, in claiming to have "the highest grade of leaf tobacco" and offered more information at a toll-free telephone number.

The National Cancer Institute grant supports creation of a unique and readily searchable archive called SCADs, for the Smoking Cessation Advertising Database. By adding data on pharmaceutical products as well, the Human Ecology project is producing what Avery calls "a huge database for potential research into media messages of all kinds." For example, researchers might be interested in the portrayal of women in advertising or the level of sexuality in advertising, according to Avery.

She notes that future researchers with an interest in health behaviors and media messages "will have a rich database of ads from a period of tremendous market change. We cover the period from 1985 through the mid-2000s, when many pharmaceutical companies got Food and Drug Administration permission to go from prescription-only (Rx) to over-the-counter (OTC) status for some of their most profitable products. This change radically impacted the availability of smoking-cessation products as well as the information that could be provided to consumers regarding all sorts of health conditions and remedies."

Findings from the tobacco part of the Cornell study could help government agencies answer some longstanding questions about the effectiveness of policy, according to Alan D. Mathios, the associate dean for academic affairs who is a co-principal investigator on the National Cancer Institute project. "For instance, does moving certain smoking-cessation products from prescription-only status to OTC affect the number of attempted and successful 'quits' by consumers?" Mathios wonders. "Our preliminary empirical evidence indicates that makers of smoking-cessation products increase the number of advertisements when a product moves to OTC status. That should expose more consumers to their product's message, but does that really result in more people quitting smoking?" This question is the focus of the team's current research. He notes that some OTC smoking-cessation products, such as chewing gums and dermal patches, originally required a doctor's prescription. Some still do, so what we learn about the effects of movement from prescription-only to OTC status on the number of quit attempts is extremely important. This also can shed light on the hotly debated questions surrounding direct-to-consumer advertising of pharmaceuticals.

As with any insulin therapy, possible side effects may include blood sugar levels that are too low (hypoglycemia); injection site reactions, including changes in fat tissue at the injection site; allergic reactions; and itching and rash.

While the smoking-cessation study shows whether a strong regulatory approach on cessation products by government can work against public-health goals, it also might reveal more about the effect of tobacco industry advertising strategies, Mathios says. "We already know that it is more difficult, from a regulatory perspective, to promote certain smoking cessation products than it is for the tobacco industry to promote smoking," he says. "The next step is to ask whether advertising of cigarettes deter consumers from quitting. For example, are there more advertisements around the New Year when many smokers resolve to quit? Our study is looking for that kind of pattern. Fortunately, a grant proposal to study these issues was ranked very high and we thus have the possibility of funding by the National Cancer Institute to examine these issues."

Joelle (Yoella) Epstein, who just graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences, was a project leader on the study. She worked on the study since her sophomore year and most recently focused her attention on the pharmaceutical ads. She was responsible for designing some of the mechanisms used in collecting, recording, and content-coding. With a summer internship at a law firm specializing in class-action suits, and plans to attend law school this fall, Epstein was prepared to scrutinize all the fine print, warnings, and disclaimers. She also noted one popular marketing technique: the use of actors and other celebrities in pharmaceutical pitches. But Epstein adds, "I am actually most intrigued with the use of race in the advertisements."

Depictions of race in pharmaceutical ads sometimes reflect a higher incidence of particular medical conditions in specific populations, such as more Type II diabetes among African Americans, Epstein informally observes. A cursory glance through the magazine advertisements in the past 20 years has revealed to Epstein a

more information?

Rosemary Avery
Cornell University
Department of Policy Analysis and Management
125 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, New York
14853-4401

607-255-2578
rja7@cornell.edu

kind of “smokers’ integration.” She explains, “We began to see a shift from separate to interracial depictions, particularly in cigarette advertising. It’s more subtle now, but race continues to be used as a marketing technique by companies.”

Part way through the study, it is still too early for reportable findings and final conclusions. But some curious trends have emerged, Avery says. “We were interested to see how advertising changes when a prescription-only pharmaceutical product becomes an OTC product. Those pages of ‘indications’ in tiny print are not required once a product is approved for OTC status. We wondered how drug companies, once they no longer had to purchase additional space in magazines for indications pages, would use their advertising budgets. We do know that many companies switch a large proportion of their ad dollars to the medium of television once the product goes OTC.”

What do students get out of the project? Avery says they are developing leadership skills. Since much of the day-to-day work is overseen by the students, they learn to manage personnel and databases, identify computing problems and devise solutions, purchase materials, and plan future research.

In Bachniak’s words, “We learned to delegate tasks, manage data, monitor productivity, and assess quality.” The experience has made her consider a career in market research.

The students also have sharpened their critical-thinking skills. “I am definitely more aware of how certain companies try to target a very specific consumer,” Bachniak says. These young adult consumers of health care are less likely than most to ask their doctor if the latest object of a multimillion-dollar marketing campaign is right for them. ●●●

Cornell Cooperative Extension Team Shows Treasury the Way to Financial Literacy

When strategists at the U.S. Department of the Treasury sought opinions on the woeful state of “financial literacy” in Americans, they heard many valuable comments from Cornell Cooperative Extension educators.

Gameboard from Bristow’s videogame called Moneyville

From her base in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Extension Associate **Barbara J. Bristow** summoned county educators in the Family Economics and Resource Management Program Work Team (PWT) to tell the Treasury what is wrong with Americans’ financial literacy—and how it needs to be improved.

“Essentially, we identified three important issues standing in the way of better financial literacy for young people and adults,” Bristow reports. “Then we brought to the attention of the Treasury strategists four existing resources that could be better utilized to address those issues.”

Before Americans can hope to achieve financial literacy, the PWT said, they need basic literacy in mathematics and language. Money management may not be intellectually sophisticated, they suggested, but without the basic math and language skills that too many people lack, “it is difficult . . . to comprehend a complex marketplace, read and understand contracts, manage daily financial transactions, and successfully handle monetary responsibilities.”

And even students with 700 math and verbal scores on their SATs may be missing two important experiences that taught others how to make financial decisions: part-time jobs and spending money in their pockets. The PWT noted that today, “money changes hands invisibly with the swipe of a card or the clicking of keys on a computer. Children do not develop an understanding of the concept of money as a medium of exchange between willing buyer and seller in the same physical sense.”

When students aren’t asking a parent for the credit card, they sometimes do ask for financial advice, Bristow notes, pointing to one encouraging study: some 94 percent of students ages 16–22 say they turn to parents as a source of financial information.

But that faith might be misplaced, considering that 40 percent of American adults admit to living “beyond our means,” while half of all Americans have no savings plans and are living “paycheck to paycheck.”

According to the team of educators, “A rapidly changing, increasingly complex financial marketplace makes it even more difficult for persons to gain the level of knowledge, skill, confidence, and competence needed to function effectively as a consumer in today’s economy.”

The PWT told the Treasury, however, that existing resources can be deployed to deliver financial education to consumers of all ages. Starting with the public-education system, the PWT recommended teacher training as the “first essential approach to incorporating financial literacy into the fabric of our culture.”

Furthermore, the Cooperative Extension system, with its network of affiliated land grant colleges, could expand programs—with more resources—to serve adults and youth and to train more volunteer educators.

Finally, the PWT recommended, better use should be made of recently developed curricula and online teaching tools. One such is the online videogame, Moneyville, from Bristow’s program called “Adding It Up” and now ready for gamers of any age at www.addsup.org.

The rewards of playing Moneyville are substantial. Among them: learning how personal values affect money decisions; how to control cash flow, use an ATM card, balance a checkbook, and save for future goals; and how to protect against frauds and scams.

“And how to have fun while learning about money,” adds Bristow, who credits Cornell senior Jeff Sickelco with formatting the videogame.

ROGER SEGELKEN

Reducing hunger and poverty around the world is **Per Pinstrup-Andersen's** mission. He says it can be done, but only if nations make an economic and ethical commitment to policies and research that will help alleviate these serious problems.

Enlightened Policies Can Benefit the Poor and Hungry

BY CLARE ULRICH

It's hard to imagine living on less than a dollar a day. Yet 1.2 billion people do just that. And 800 million people—almost three times the total U.S. population—don't know where their next meal is coming from, while 153 million children under the age of five are underweight. Five to six million preschool children die each year from hunger and malnutrition and poverty. Further, poverty and hunger prevent 114 million children from doing something many Westerners take for granted—completing primary school.

"Hunger and malnutrition are terrible humanitarian problems," says Per Pinstrup-Andersen, the H. E. Babcock Professor of Food, Nutrition, and Public Policy in the Division of Nutritional Sciences and professor of applied economics in the Department of Applied Economics and Management in Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "They also result in a terrible waste of human resources. If you are a sick, malnourished child, you will catch any illness that comes your way, because you have very little resistance. If you survive, you grow up to be a weak and less productive adult. Your life will be shorter and you will be unable to work to your full potential. This reflects on the rest of society, because the world is denied the benefit of the contributions that these people could make. Decreased productivity means lower economic growth for everyone—the poor as well as the nonpoor," he points out.

Pinstrup-Andersen also stresses that hunger and poverty are ethical problems as well because the world community has the economic means and the knowledge to help the world's poor out of poverty and hunger.

The conviction with which he talks about hunger makes it easy to see why Pinstrup-Andersen received the 2001 World Food Prize, a prestigious international award that recognizes individuals who have made vital contributions to improving the quality and availability of food throughout the world. He was chosen for the award for his research that enabled several governments to reform their food subsidy programs and other policies to better feed their poor. The research also led to the establishment of the Global Food for Education Initiative, in which families in Bangladesh and other developing countries receive food subsidies when their children stay in school. > > >

FotoSearch

UN/DPI Photo R.Chalasani

Before returning to Cornell to teach in 2003 (he had been a professor of food economics here from 1987 until 1992), Pinstrup-Andersen served as director-general of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington, D.C., from 1992 to 2002. Under his leadership, IFPRI became the world's leading think tank on hunger issues. Staffed primarily by economists, it is dedicated to finding sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty, such as establishing policies to help farmers gain access to credit, policies to transfer funds from the government to poor and hungry people, and policies to best utilize the water that is available in certain rural areas.

IFPRI is one of 15 agricultural centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), an alliance of 63 members made up of countries, organizations, and private foundations. CGIAR is the world's largest publicly funded international agricultural research organization.

UN/DPI Photo S. Rotner

Half the members are developing countries, and 13 of the centers are headquartered in developing countries. The organization operates on the premise that since 75 percent of poor people depend on agriculture to survive, poverty cannot be reduced without investments in agricultural research. Since it was established in 1971, CGIAR's focus has shifted from increasing the productivity of food crops to applying biodiversity and environmental research to enhance sustainable agricultural practices. Today, more than 8,500 CGIAR scientists and staff work in more than 100 countries.

Pinstrup-Andersen has served as chair of CGIAR's Science Council since 2003. In that role, he advises CGIAR on research priorities, evaluates the quality of research conducted by the 15 centers, and measures the impact of the centers' work. In 2004, CGIAR members contributed more than $450 million to CGIAR to mobilize science for the benefit of poor farming communities worldwide.

While CGIAR members share a common research agenda and a willingness to invest financial support and human and technical resources to reduce poverty, Pinstrup-Andersen makes it very clear that their chief objective is to help people *escape* poverty rather than *bring* them out of poverty. He is distinguishing between programs that enable developing countries to participate in sustainable efforts to feed their poor and programs that encourage a country's dependency on exhaustible external assistance.

"Traditionally, agricultural research has been very much of a top-down effort," Pinstrup-Andersen explains. "Once people earned their Ph.D.s, they would conduct research according to what they thought farmers needed rather than ask the farmers what they wanted. Researchers and farmers must work as partners rather than in a patron-client relationship in order to focus on the needs of poor farmers and to enhance farmers' ability to solve their own problems."

CGIAR helps national institutions move toward a participatory approach like this. It has trained more than 75,000 scientists and researchers in various countries; reduced pesticide use by teaching integrated pest management and biological control methods; taught low-till farming practices in Asia; enabled African producers to access international markets for pigeon pea, a nutritious legume; as well as helped develop hardier rice, corn, and bean crops around the world.

Of course, recurrent roadblocks slow progress. Pinstrup-Andersen points out that developing countries do not typically invest much in agricultural research because they either lack funds or do not consider research a priority. On average, developing countries spend a little more than one half of one percent of the value of agricultural production on research, whereas the United States spends five to ten times as much.

"The policy debate about hunger and poverty and agriculture is so heavily influenced by interest groups with various biases that unless we bring in empirical evidence, it is going to result in the wrong recommendations for policy," warns Pinstrup-Andersen. "The way to get empirical evidence is to do research that examines the causality between what you can do something about and what you want to get done, and then you bring that data into the debate. I did that kind of research at IFPRI. At CGIAR, we get the empirical evidence to policymakers. It's the combination of appropriate policies and the application of science that will make the difference in the lives of poor and hungry people. I have the opportunity to contribute to both."

Pinstrup-Andersen's current research focuses on the effects of globalization. He says his chief interest is to gather empirical evidence that he can use to propose international and domestic policy interventions that will change the outcome of globalization to enable poor people to escape poverty, redistribute income more equitably, and support sustainable development.

UN/DPI Photo J. Isaac

For example, he believes that unless developed countries are willing to open their markets to agricultural exports from developing countries and eliminate tariffs, developing countries and the poor people who live in them will derive limited benefits from globalization. In addition, poor farmers and rural areas must have access to infrastructure such as roads, storage facilities, credit, markets, and information and communications technology to thrive. Without access, the rural poor will remain marginalized and food insecure. Pinstrup-Andersen backs his ideas with data on the success and failures of programs that have been tried in China, India, Africa, Bangladesh, Latin America, and other developing areas in the world.

"The problem with globalization," Pinstrup-Andersen says, "is that it has moved much faster than the institutions that are needed to guide it. If globalization is guided only by the market, it will benefit those who already have resources. It must be guided by a shared vision among nations implemented by international institutions and agreed-upon policies. Solidarity between rich and poor will benefit both. As nations continue to exchange public goods and other resources, they must begin to share responsibility for what happens outside their borders—economically as well as socially. Policy decisions in one country may affect people in other countries. If we want a truly globalized world, these effects should be considered," he says.

Despite the evidence, few governments do anything about poverty in their countries. Pinstrup-Andersen has reviewed the goals established at 26 international conferences that have convened since 1974 to discuss world food and related issues; he found that not a single major goal has been achieved.

"When governments leave these international conferences, they totally forget about the promises they made," Pinstrup-Andersen points out. "There's no enforcement whatsoever, and hunger is simply not the priority of most governments." He believes that those in power do not expect to benefit from solving poverty and hunger problems. They also don't believe they will be harmed by allowing the status quo to continue. He says they're mistaken on both counts.

When the earnings of the richest one percent of the world's population equal the total earnings of the bottom 57 percent, discontent sows major problems. According to Pinstrup-Andersen, poverty, hunger, and huge disparities in income distribution generate a sense of hopelessness among the poor that has tremendous personal and public repercussions.

"If you're watching your child gradually wither away and there's nothing you can do about it, you get angry. There's a tremendous amount of anger out there that doesn't come to the surface, because poor people have no power to expose these injustices. But sometimes their poverty provides a moral foundation for others with money and power who, for whatever reasons, want to do harm to other groups," he says.

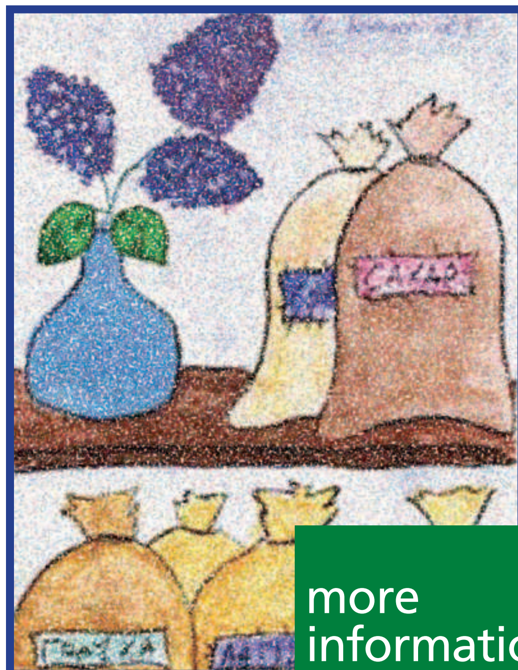
"That is not to say that poor people are terrorists. Of course they're not. They're too busy trying to survive," Pinstrup-Andersen points out. "But if you are a person who feels you have nothing to lose, you may be susceptible to terrorist appeals—and you may be consumed with enough anger and hatred to drive you to kill and even die for a cause."

Given the strong ethical, humanitarian, economic, and security reasons for solving world hunger, Pinstrup-Andersen is puzzled and annoyed that decision makers either choose not to do anything about it or adopt short-term solutions. He says that investments in various kinds of protection such as military interventions or stronger border control, and applying force rather than more sustainable solutions, exacerbate the problems and reveal a lack of understanding.

"We need to keep talking to decision makers about how it is in their interest to solve poverty, hunger, and nutrition problems without the application of force. If they want to have a stable country, if they want to stay in power, whether they were elected or appointed or took power by force, they need to reduce the inequalities that exist in their countries and bring the poor and hungry people up to a level where they are no longer poor and hungry. The more inequality you have, the more instability you have," Pinstrup-Andersen asserts.

When asked what he would like to see happen in the future, Pinstrup-Andersen cites the first of eight goals developed in 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit and agreed on by 186 participating countries: to halve by 2015 the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day. He feels that there is no reason why this can't be achieved, other than the lack of will to do so on the part of decision makers. But he knows just as deeply that it will not get done, as he puts it, by doing "business as usual."

"If those of us who are privileged enough not to be suffering from poverty-related problems would be willing to make the investments that are necessary for the poor to get access to education, clean drinking water, jobs, good food, primary health care, and basic necessities like that, the returns on those investments would be very high. And it would be a matter of less than a generation before society as a whole will benefit," he says. "If people perceive hunger and malnutrition as problems that require a handout, they're missing the point. The point is that we will all benefit if nobody starves and if nobody is malnourished. It is an investment in our common future." ●●●



Drawings from Moldovan children, who were recipients of school meals provided under USDA's Global Food for Education Initiative (see www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/FoodAid/FFE/gfe/moldova/moldova.htm)

more information?

Per Pinstrup-Andersen
Cornell University
Division of Nutritional Sciences
305 Savage Hall
Ithaca, New York
14853-6301

607-255-9429
pp94@cornelledu

What's new

Programs for Disadvantaged School Children Work Even Better for Advantaged Kids

Comstock Images

Stephen Ceci's penchant for stirring up debate over thorny policy questions isn't limited to his scholarship on children's testimony. In March of 2005, Ceci and graduate student Paul Papierno published "The Rhetoric and Reality of Gap Closing: When the 'Have-Nots' Gain but the 'Haves' Gain Even More" in the journal *American Psychologist* with the expressed goal of raising moral, economic, and political conundrums.

In the study, Ceci and Papierno examined the commonly accepted policy of various U.S. government agencies that create interventions—such as Head Start and enhanced reading instruction in the public schools—to "impede the buildup of a cumulative gap between the nations' most advantaged and disadvantaged children . . . by elevating the performance of the lowest group."

Surprisingly, the scientists found that sometimes when such interventions are made available not just to the group in need of help but to all children, the size of the original disparity grows larger. They discovered that this happens because, while the intervention may be helpful to the disadvantaged group, it can work even better for the advantaged group.

Ceci and Papierno want to encourage a debate on whether this finding renders current policy undesirable.

"On the one hand, we want to right past wrongs and injustices by targeting interventions," Ceci says. "On the other hand, America's economic security is tied to our best students being as good as they can be compared to the children of our international trading partners. The evidence shows that if those kids have access to the same interventions, they benefit from them even more—but the effect is to increase the gap between the haves and have nots." ●

METTA WINTER

A Grandparent at Home Buffers Drawbacks of Single-Parenthood

Many studies have shown that children living in a single-parent family tend to do worse academically and receive less intellectual stimulation than children living with married parents. Having a grandparent in the home, however, appears to buffer some of these negative effects, according to a new study in the College of Human Ecology.

"When looking at children's test scores, we find that children who live with a single mom and a grandparent fare just as well as children living with married parents," says Rachel Dunifon, assistant professor of policy analysis and management. "These findings contradict the idea that living with two married parents is the primary situation in which children can thrive."

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Dunifon found that living with a single mother is linked to significant declines in academic achievement. In contrast, the test scores of children who live in single-mother families that also contain a grandparent do not significantly differ from children in married-couple families, she says.

In 2003 about 23 percent of all U.S. children lived with a single mother, including 16 percent of white children and 51 percent of African-American children. Of these children, 13 percent also lived with a grandparent in the household.

The role of grandparents in single-parent families can be important to policy. "For example, some welfare policies for single mothers try to encourage marriage because the common thinking is that children fare best when living with married parents," Dunifon says.

Dunifon's co-author on the study was Lori Kowaleski-Jones, assistant professor of family and consumer studies at the University of Utah. ●

SUSAN LANG

Casasola Receives Presidential Award for Research on Language Development

Marianella Casasola, the Lois and Mel Tukman Endowed Assistant Professor in Human Development, was awarded a Presidential Early Career Award for Science and Engineering (PECASE) at the White House on June 13 for her work on studying the connections between infant language and thought by examining how language inputs from the environment influence the way children form spatial categories.

Casasola's award is one of 20 given to young scientists and engineers whose work is supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF); PECASE awards are considered the highest national honor for investigators in the early stages of promising research careers.

Casasola's NSF award of $400,000 over five years is for research conducted in multiple languages and that builds on the idea that language is a powerful tool in directing the attention of young children and shaping the way they think.

"The aim of the research project is to document how young children acquire the semantic spatial categories that are specific to their language," Casasola explained. When English-learning toddlers, for example, learn the preposition "in," they apply it to all types of containment, whereas Korean-learning toddlers learn a different word that only applies to tight-fitting containment. "Thus, in acquiring spatial language, these toddlers respectively learn to attend to different types of spatial relations and learn to organize the same spatial events on a very different basis for linguistic expression," Casasola said.

Casasola's research program is integrated with an educational component in which students, including high school students, from underrepresented minorities and from different linguistic backgrounds, assist in conducting the research. ●

SUSAN LANG

Students who want to learn how policy is created spend spring semester living and working in Albany N.Y., while earning 15 academic credits.

POLICY MAKERS IN THE MAKING

Cornell Capital Semester

Interns in the Cornell Capital Semester are truly battle tested in the workings of the nation's most complex state government—and they come through with flying colors.

Consider just the last four years. Ten of the 28 recipients of the New York State Assembly Distinguished Interns Award have been from the College of Human Ecology. This year's recipients are **Seth Moskowitz '06** and **Audrey Welker '06**. Both are majoring in policy analysis and management (PAM). Each year the award is given to only seven interns from a field of 150 undergraduate interns hailing from colleges and universities around New York State.

High honors have also been accorded Human Ecology interns in the New York State Senate. The culminating event on the Senate side is a full-day mock Senate session. In the past four years, two PAM students have been elected Senate Majority Leaders and one was elected Senate Whip for that event.

"Cornell interns have developed a reputation of excellence with legislators," says **William Rosen**, program director and senior lecturer of policy analysis and management. "It is very rewarding to see the interns mature in their understanding of the political process and in their ability to succeed in a political/work environment."

Being given responsibility to succeed on their own at real work is one element that distinguishes the Capital Semester from internships in the federal government. Each Capital Semester student is the sole intern in his or her legislator's office. (In federal internships, 30 interns commonly work for one senator or representative.) Since legislative offices are notoriously short staffed, interns are expected to help draft legislation, conduct research, write press releases, and attend hearings. It's not unusual for interns to meet with consultants and lobbyists on their own.

Rosen meets weekly with the students at the New York State Government Affairs seminar, where he brings academic knowledge back into the political world.

CORBIS

"Students often get wedded to the ideas of their legislator without considering some of the science-based knowledge they've learned in the classroom," Rosen says. "They can lose sight of the side effects, such as the people who might lose out."

To sharpen students' critical-thinking skills, they must make an oral presentation to the seminar group justifying one bill that their legislator is promoting. Rosen and their fellow interns give them a thorough grilling on the theoretical and scientific rationale for their positions.

A second, and equally rigorous, academic component of the internship is excelling in one of two courses: Partisan Politics and Public Policy Debates in New York, taught by Jeffrey M. Stonecash, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs; and Legislative Politics: Representing and Coordinating Political Diversity in New York, taught by Robert F. Pecorella, professor of government and politics at St. Johns University.

Graduates of this program, the most fully developed of its kind in the country, have a significant advantage in applying for jobs in state and local government and are increasingly entering positions of responsibility unusual for new graduates. For example, PAM major Cara Palumbo '04 was hired the January following her internship as a budget analyst for the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Graduates have proven that the internship gives them well-honed, transferable skills along with unparalleled political savvy.

As Rosen points out: "They say if you can navigate New York politics, you can navigate politics anywhere."

METTA WINTER

Cornell University
College of Human Ecology
Ithaca, NY 14853-4401

Nonprofit Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
Cornell University

College of Human Ecology— Responding to human needs through research, education, and outreach

Human ECOLOGY

Next Issue:
Reports from the Ecology of Obesity conference presented by the College of Human Ecology at Cornell, June 6 & 7, 2005