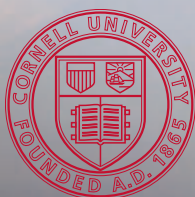


Human ECOLOGY

Leading
toward a Better World

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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.

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Editor: Elizabeth Bauman

Designer: Judy Burns

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

Cover Illustration: Laurie Ray

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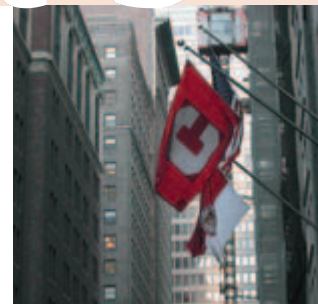
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Leading toward a Better World

It is often said that you'll know a leader when you see one. There are certain traits inherent in a leader that set them apart from the crowd and enable them to mobilize, motivate, and change the world around them. Paramount among the skills of an effective leader is the ability to inspire others and create purpose among those they lead in an effort to make a difference in their community, society, or marketplace.

Fostering and promoting leadership is a key part of the mission of the College of Human Ecology. This goal is pursued in a myriad of ways at the college, through student leadership activities, groundbreaking research initiatives, and academic pursuit that hones problem-solving skills. At the undergraduate level students at the college are trained through the Leadership Initiative program, which is based on the premise that all individuals have the potential to lead. And programs such as the Urban Semester in New York City are offered to allow students to widen their world view, which is invaluable for future leaders. And since all students learn by example, a key part of our leadership program is the important role that CHE faculty play in leading the way in groundbreaking research to find solutions for today's real-world problems. This array of programs provides Human Ecology students with the problem-solving skills that leaders need today to effectively change and improve their communities. Several alumni who are profiled in this issue of *Human Ecology* embody the traits of leaders who are well rounded in diverse careers and as community members. We highlight these alumni as a testament to the success of CHE leadership training and also to serve as an example for CHE students who will become future leaders.

We at the College of Human Ecology take our leadership responsibilities seriously and are committed to responding to real-world human needs through teaching, research, and extension. We look forward to advancing this mission in conjunction with the new Cornell University president, Dr. David J. Skorton, whom we will welcome on July 1, 2006. In this day and age the dire need for leadership, amidst global conflicts, local challenges, and natural disasters, serves only to reinforce our already firm commitment to training leaders to respond to critical human needs in today's world.



Lisa Staiano-Coico

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

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Leadership is not positional and does not require authority or charisma.

Students discover that leaders are made, not born, as they learn to build teams, trust others, and take risks.

Leadership can emerge from any position in a group or organization.

Leadership requires commitment to excellence, passion, integrity, and courage.

Leaders never have all the answers.

Leadership Initiative Teaches Principles through Practice



BY ROGER SEGELKEN

By his own account, Ruben Frescas was a confirmed introvert with a hesitant approach to life in general and to the educational challenges he hoped would prepare him for a career in medicine. The son of a stonemason and a warehouse worker from a small town in Illinois, Frescas had excelled in high school. But so had every other Cornell student, he soon discovered. His pre-med curriculum was even tougher than expected. Lecture-based classes were not his favorite way to learn. And so much of the coursework was long on theory with little chance to practice.

The student whose idea of action was serving on the Cornell University Emergency Medical Service as an EMT and a crew chief longed to roll up his sleeves and really do something that would make a difference. Instead he was treading water. Barely. Then a friend told Frescas about the course called Collaborative Leadership that is part of the multiyear Leadership Initiative program in the College of Human Ecology. The course starts with a required retreat, with 48 intensive hours of self-discovery and full immersion among a diverse spectrum of personality types, all would-be team-builders, and everyone competing (and, ideally, collaborating) to lead toward achievement.

Building confidence Frescas “survived” the retreat with 30 new best friends, and he excelled in the course. “The class helped me build confidence and gave me skills,” he recalls. “I never thought I could do half the things I’ve done at Cornell.”

One of those unexpected things is a new student program, founded and led by Frescas and run through the



pre-med honors society, to mentor more junior pre-meds through the bewildering process of selecting appropriate courses and preparing for the dreaded MCATs and medical school interviews. He also served as a teaching assistant to other students whom he followed through the Collaborative Leadership course.

One leadership skill is effective communication. “We learned not only writing and making oral presentations in a precise and forceful manner, but ‘active listening’ as well,” Frescas reports. He appreciated his newly sharpened communication skills when he came to the end of a medical college interview and the doctor told him, “You must be one of those extroverts who can talk to anyone.” Not at all, Frescas insists; he is still a secret introvert.

Marionna Amelia Gomez, a Policy Analysis and Management major preparing for a career in public affairs, says that, for her, one of the most important aspects of the course was writing short reflections on readings and class discussions. “Unlike other college courses in which journal assignments were meant to determine how well you grasped the assigned material, these reflections demonstrated to what extent the material grasped you. You were forced to answer questions that may have made you uncomfortable, to think deeply and broadly, and to take hold of the material by applying it to your own experience.”

Dreams deferred, no more Brenda Bricker, who started the Leadership Initiative program six years ago, is the director of leadership and undergraduate research for the college. Bricker worked in Admissions for 25 years, reading many thousands of application essays. Those essays self-portrayed nearly every applicant as a high school super achiever, bubbling with plans to change the world—if only they could get into Cornell. Allowing for essayists’ hyperbole, Bricker realized, many of the Cornell applicants probably were potential leaders with confidence aplenty. Certainly they were salutatorians and valedictorians from the loftiest percentile of their schools.

Then they arrive at Cornell and quickly discover that everyone else is above average, too. So the erstwhile leaders hunker down, and most do well academically, which is nothing to be modest about at Cornell, but somewhere along the line their dreams are deferred.

“We tell them not to wait for some magic moment, later in their career, to change, to take on the mantle of leadership,” Bricker says. “We tell them, ‘There are important things to be done now, things that you can do better than anyone else. What are you waiting for?’”

The program teaches that we are all born with the potential to lead, but that most leadership traits, perspectives, and skills require effort and experience to develop, that all kinds of leaders can contribute, that charisma alone is rarely sufficient. “We demonstrate that there are many styles of leadership, that quiet leaders can be wonderfully effective once they make themselves heard,” Bricker says. “We help them discover that no matter how shy they think they are, that does not have to be a limit, that it is important to embrace both your strengths and liabilities. We want students to come to respect people who started in different places than they did, and to open themselves up to a new world of possibility.” >>>

Leadership ability grows from hard work and practice over time; it is a group process.

Homegrown Leaders

None of the eight resident advisers (RAs) nibbling pizza at the first program-planning meeting of the new semester, on a snowy January night in the Faculty-in-Residence apartment of Paul and Barbara Eshelman, wears a badge reading "Leader." These sophomores, juniors, and one senior are hardly older than the nearly 300 first-year residents of the Low Rise 6 and 7 halls on Cornell's North Campus. The RAs say they sometimes act as surrogate parents—or peer counselors, nannies, and police. But leaders they are.

Faculty-in-residence and resident advisers make college life a little less bewildering for first-year students.

Whether or not the RAs acknowledge their newfound leadership abilities, Paul Eshelman says he notices personal growth with each passing semester. "Our role, as Faculty-in-Residence, is to build communities. The resident advisers are the leaders of this community. It's so gratifying to see them grow, as their personalities unfold. There is so much talent here. Maybe the best we can do as Faculty-in-Residence is to help them celebrate their gifts and talents."

RA doors are likewise knockable, says Brian Santacrose, a sophomore in Human Development from Albany, N.Y., and he's always happy to chat. But these days, most student-to-student communication is by cell phone and IM (computer instant messaging).

Sometimes the RAs' most important functions are resolving disputes and giving advice, says RA Natalie Adams, a Human Ecology senior from San Diego, Cal. They've learned to adjudicate such things as roommate incompatibility issues and give counsel on rollercoaster love lives.

Still reluctant to assume the mantle of leadership, RA Libby Boymel, a Human Ecology sophomore from Sudbury, Mass., says, "We're more like parents—with a whole lot of 17-year-olds." If so, that makes Faculty-in-Residence "grandparents," concedes Paul Eshelman, a Design and Environmental Analysis professor.

In fact, the relationships are a bit more complex than that, says Jennifer Gerner, a professor of Policy Analysis and Management and an enthusiastic former Faculty-in-Residence program participant. The RAs report directly to residence hall directors, rather than to Faculty-in-Residence, Gerner notes. But RAs are important links between Faculty-in-Residence and the students. "My RAs were terrific, dedicated students who worked really hard, especially with the freshmen." RAs in Gerner's halls offered to cook and serve during the monthly brunches she used to host in her apartment. "Everyone liked it because it was like visiting a real home. I'm still in touch with some of the former RAs."

"We try to be consistent, to lead by example, and not play favorites," says Adams, the Human Ecology senior who said she applied to become an RA "because I wanted to make some contribution to the university in a proactive way."

This will be the Eshelmans' final year as Faculty-in-Residence. They started six years ago, after their youngest went off to college, and now they will return to their Ithaca home that has been rented all this time. That thought reminds Paul Eshelman of one more benefit to participation in Cornell's Faculty-in-Residence Program. Besides the satisfaction of watching students grow into leaders, he says, "this has been a terrific antidote to empty-nest syndrome."

● ROGER SEGELKEN

Paul Eshelman (left) and Barbara Eshelman (right) host a get-together in their Faculty-in-Residence apartment.

Real leaders seek

help Discovering the value of diversity begins early in the Leadership Initiative. During the orientation-retreat, students with similar personality styles are deliberately teamed together to tackle assigned tasks. Lesson number one is that without diversity on a team, progress is difficult and incomplete. Lesson two, for students who come to the program with previously acknowledged leadership abilities: get over that habit of doing all the work yourself. Real leaders seek help from others and don't try to run away with the project.

And with a semester-long introductory course including a few mini-projects, and experience helping to teach that course, Leadership Initiative participants working toward the Leadership Certificate—the honors-level credential that they are experienced problem-solvers who can collaborate to meet ambitious goals—are ready for the Junior-Senior Project. For five academic credits over two semesters, students propose, design, and carry out an individual or team project that applies theory to practice in the community and relate that project to their various majors. Furthermore, the projects must be designed, from the start, to be sustainable when the founding leaders move on to other things.

Leading new leaders

"Now I know how to act in groups, when to step up, but also when to let others lead," says Rachel Barry, a Design and Environmental Analysis major, who co-chaired a project called Fostering Leadership in Youth (FLY), together with a sophomore pre-med student, Paulvalery Roulette. Barry and Roulette and FLY team members trained fellow Cornell students to lead after-school activities and games at an Ithaca middle school.

FLY, Barry says, "tries to foster leadership qualities that we think will make the young people more confident, self aware, and able to take responsibility even now within



UNIVERSITY PHOTO/KEVIN STEARNS

their school community.” In fact, FLY was started by a previous Collaborative Leadership class, Barry notes, “and we added a few touches of our own.” Even at that, Barry maintains, the program grew from very powerful teamwork.

Collaboration has been the key concept in the Leadership Initiative program, according to Lisa Plush '04, who took the course the second year it was offered and now is a second-year law student attending Georgetown University. Plush knew what she wanted: “I expected to grow and develop my ability to work with diverse groups of people, to lead, and to learn how to become an effective follower.” The Human Development major also served as a teaching assistant and she had the satisfaction of helping to create a program that Director Bricker says is still a work in progress.

“I feel as if the program, the college, and I have made great strides since the inception of the Leadership Initiative program,” Plush says. “Helping build the program, I learned a lot about collaboration, teamwork, effective speaking skills, capitalizing on diversity, and working more effectively with ‘challenging’ members of a team.”

Teaching what can't be taught The experience that Plush calls “empowering” and Barry calls “energizing” introduces another E word—ethics—although Bricker believes ethics cannot be imposed by a college professor. Instead, the Leadership Initiative takes the model-and-challenge approach. Models can be people or the codes of ethics established for the professions students hope to join (law, medicine, business, for example), and students are helped to examine the ethical foundations of their own lives so far. For some, religious training was largely influential, Bricker notes, and some picked up their ethics from parents and peers. Preliminary perceptions are not always

reality; Bricker says she hopes students will learn for themselves by careful observation. “It is easier to cheat if you believe that everyone else is cheating. But are they really?” And even if others cheat, Bricker counsels, “You need to figure out what *you* stand for, then develop techniques for holding that course.”

Ruben Frescas, the teaching assistant who wants to go to medical school next, delved into codes of ethics for the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry. Ethics has a lot to do with respect, Frescas says—respect for others and respect for oneself. A respectful person, Frescas explains, can honestly answer the question: “Will you stick to your beliefs and principles or will you collapse to pressure and compromise your principles?”

Another requirement for the Leadership Certificate is a year's volunteer service on the policy board of a nonprofit organization. The experience, Bricker says, is designed to acquaint students with community and professional leaders as models and to demonstrate the complexity of public service and its priority in the lives of many business and community leaders.

If board membership whets the appetite, students are encouraged to take one of the newest courses in the College of Human Ecology, Leadership in the Nonprofit Environment. The course emphasizes organizations' planning, evaluation, funding, and marketing of programs. Themes to be explored in the course, which debuted during the spring 2006 semester, include shared vision, sustained and effective teamwork, consensus building, coping with change, service, grantsmanship, and the challenges of funding nonprofit work.

Whether the course's graduates go to work as professionals in nonprofit service organizations or later find time to volunteer on

Feedback from the Field

A pioneering participant in the Leadership Initiative program's first year in Human Ecology, Brian West now works as a chemotherapy clinic session assistant at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

“Each day in clinic I reflect back on my experience in Collaborative Leadership—the lessons, lectures, activities, readings, and inspirational ideology—and apply what I learned to my current job. The cancer-care environment can be extremely intense and can make the simplest task, such as scheduling a patient for a chemotherapy infusion or a post-operative scan, extremely difficult.

Time and time again, I think back on my leadership training—learning to communicate effectively, to visualize change, to work collaboratively—and bring this knowledge into cancer care to better the patient experience.

“Overseeing the clinic often means making difficult decisions and handling difficult interactions. For example, deciding which patients require priority care, analyzing which days require additional clinical support, and determining how to balance the patients' needs with the doctors' orders. It also requires an understanding of the personalities of each of the patients and how people are affected by illness. All of this is leadership; from the large-scale clinical planning to the small-scale individual interaction, I am regularly applying my training in leadership in the medical field.”

West said his job as a chemotherapy session assistant (“basically the hub, the leader, of the clinic”) showed him medical care from the patient's perspective, and now he's ready to start medical school.

“I know as I grow in this aim and develop into a patient-oriented physician, I will continue to collaborate with colleagues and apply my leadership skills to better the patient experience and ultimately improve health care for all.”

more information?

Brenda Bricker
Cornell University
Human Ecology Admissions,
Registrar, and Student Services
160A Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, NY, 14853-4401

607-255-9850
bhb4@cornell.edu

boards of directors, Bricker hopes the leadership skills will come in handy. They are some of the same abilities students develop throughout the Collaborative Leadership course and further hone in advanced classes—skills such as self-understanding and self-management, initiative taking, giving honest feedback and using critical feedback from others more effectively, risk-taking and resilience, using failure as a learning experience, facing conflict head on, and seeing the big picture with all its possibilities.

When Bricker finds students' initiative stymied by inertia, when they seem to be having trouble making life-course decisions, she poses a provocative question to help sharpen their sense of purpose

and re-examine plans: “Ask yourself,” she says, “What is the one thing you would do if you had only a year to do it?”

One Leadership Initiative participant who pondered that question decided to go to medical school instead of law school—more than a one-year commitment, of course, but that's what leaders do when they see all the possibilities in the big picture. ●●●

Immersed in New York's Diversity

BY METTA WINTER

URBAN

The discussions about race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality are tough, really tough for the students in the college's Urban Semester program.

Consider that the undergraduates in Urban Semester are expected to move about New York City's five boroughs, visiting with people unlike those they had ever met before: a Haitian voodoo priest inside his temple; an illegal Senegalese immigrant in the Muslim school he founded for West African children; a 26-year-old Hassidic rabbi in the social service agency he established to serve his religious community, 40 percent of whom are on welfare; and a member of the Lakota nation who is venerated as a leader by the American Indian and non-Native American communities alike.

These exchanges are intended to press students to open their minds to ways of viewing the world often diametrically opposed to what they believe is "true."

"This isn't a theological exercise; we're not trying to change anybody's mind, but we are trying to question their assumptions and expand their ideas of reality," explains Sam Beck, the director of Human Ecology's Urban Semester program who, for 35 years, has been creating experience-based learning contexts that offer students intense, face-to-face encounters with individuals, young and old, who exemplify a life well lived.

Beck uses the perspectives of anthropology—among them cultural relativism—to help students become aware of, then suspend, their own assumptions to become deeply immersed in the experiences of others. "In this way, students can come to understand, hence respect, another person on his or her own terms and, at a minimum, should be able to articulate why the person believes as he or she does," Beck says.

Alumna Janelle Greene '95 found that the program makes an overarching contribution to developing the leaders of tomorrow through these encounters, which increase students' comfort with differences and, in the process, help them get to know themselves better.

"True leaders are genuine and are not restrained at expressing their true beliefs; but have the grace and wisdom to know how and when to share those beliefs or make judicious decisions in light of this for the common good," says Greene, who went on to earn a law degree and now is working in community development and inter-governmental relations for a large not-for-profit affordable housing organization in New York.

In the global marketplace of the 21st century, Beck knows that individuals who are at ease when surrounded by others different from themselves will hold the competitive edge. Diversity and nonconformity are the font of novel insights, ideas, and perspectives essential to keeping pace with rapidly changing times.

Where better to feel immersed in diversity than in the nation's most densely populated city, drawing 8.1 million people from 180 countries to live within its 321 square miles? People flock there, many to change themselves, a fact not lost on Urban Semester students.

Most, but not all, of the 32 juniors and seniors in the program are from the College of Human Ecology. One in three is pre-med. With the exception of a small number of students from low-income households who came to Cornell through specialized schools or educationally oriented households, Urban Semester participants self-identify as growing-up in homogeneous communities—generally white and Asian, relatively affluent suburbs.

Three days a week, the students work in internships in the fields of medicine, law, government, the not-for-profit sector, design and the arts, and the media, while volunteering a fourth day in inner-city schools. They must also attend two group seminars: Multicultural Issues in Urban Affairs, in which they travel about the city, and Multicultural Practice, which is their intellectual home base. The latter is a three-hour, graduate-style seminar, in which students are encouraged to take leadership responsibility for presenting to their classmates oral reflections on the fields they are gaining expertise in or on newly found passions.



PROGRAM PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF SAM BECK

Semester

"The program was a gift that Cornell gave me," says Greene, who interned at the Legal Defense and Education Fund. "It opened my eyes to what possibilities existed with a law degree, it gave me a chance to interact with many of the country's best civil rights litigators, and it increased my confidence concerning what I desired to achieve academically and socially."

Beck shows students how to use the tools of ethnographic inquiry in their internships to make detailed observations of, as he puts it, "the circumstances, practices, and activities that make up the local character of work." He also provides them with a rapid assessment tool with which to quickly understand the organization's culture.

"Typically, it takes a person a year or more just to figure out a new job," Beck observes. "When a student has spent a semester here completing the course work associated with the internship, they have, in effect, completed the equivalent of an entry-level position."

Secure leaders are confident that they can draw information from a wide range of sources. Hence, a primary goal of the Urban Semester is to show academically successful students that knowledge is found beyond books; that learning is an organic process, a social process involving encounters with people and attending to "reading the world." Beck says that the program encourages young people to "look at real experiences as an authoritative way to learn and to see the wisdom of others as a text."

In the Multicultural Practice seminar, it's not uncommon for students to change their professional trajectories after hearing about their classmates' internship experiences. "Our students are so goal oriented and often become focused on a particular professional direction very early," Beck says. "The program opens up the doors to other options in a way in which they can visualize themselves in a new role."

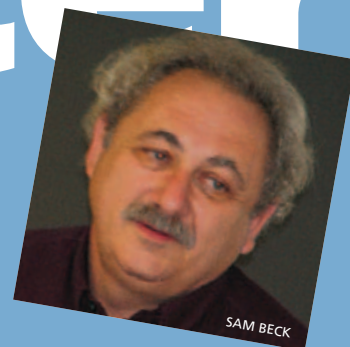
For students who are convinced medical school is the next step, Beck has created a separate seminar for them. Culture,

Medicine, and Professional Practice in a Diverse World complements the students' internship experience of shadowing physicians in rotations and research laboratories at New York Hospital–Cornell Medical Center. In the seminar, students learn about various aspects of medical practice and culture from leaders at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University. They speak with deans responsible for the admissions process and examine, from a historical perspective, who has traditionally been admitted to the medical school and who has not.

Medical schools offer little access to opportunities to become competent communicators across issues of difference even though this skill is central to the practice of medicine in the 21st century. That's one reason all Urban Semester students spend one day a week crossing ethnocultural, socioeconomic, and racial boundaries through tutoring and mentoring children in the inner-city's schools. Such community service experiences increase student awareness of their civic responsibilities while providing support for a community in need, Beck says.

In addition, the dynamic, nonlinear, complex, and unpredictable interactions they have with children reduce students' anxieties about how they'll cope when entering new and different social situations—an important attribute for tomorrow's leaders.

Beck sums up his approach to teaching: "We focus a lot of attention on assets—individual assets, social assets, community assets—because it's very difficult to build on deficits. When we go into low-income communities, it's best to look at the strengths, rather than what's missing. And if we want to create a just, democratic, and equitable society, we have to look at what people and communities bring to the table that can be used to build on. That's what leadership is about." ●●●



www.human.cornell.edu/che/Academics/Urban_Semester

The College of Human Ecology's Sloan Program in Health Administration educates leaders for an industry as complex as it is idiosyncratic.

Sloan Program Cultivates Leaders in Health Care

BY CAROLE STONE

Why do students choose the Sloan Program in Health Administration? “They think of health care as a meaningful way to make a living,” says Will White, director of the Sloan Program and professor of Policy Analysis and Management. “Health care is certainly not the highest paying industry. The students who choose it are drawn to an industry that takes care of people and makes a difference.”

Students in this two-year professional degree program learn administrative skills; familiarity with the organization of the health care system and public policy issues; the tools of public health; the finesse to work with doctors, nurses, and others; and, sometimes, the entrepreneurial wherewithal to innovate and improve the performance of the current health care system.

“Promoting quality, access, efficiency, and innovation in every aspect of health care delivery and financing is the overall goal of the program,” says Brooke Hollis, executive director of the program and a 1978 Sloan graduate. “Almost 50 percent of Sloan Program graduates work for organizations that deliver health care, notably but not exclusively hospitals,” he says. “The rest are spread over many different categories both domestically and internationally.”

The Sloan Program's Master of Health Administration degree (M.H.A.) is a specialized management degree that focuses on the health industry but is broad enough to allow students to follow a variety of career paths. The program's core courses include health care organization, accounting, marketing,

leadership, financial management, and ethics, and such subjects as epidemiology and regression analysis and managerial forecasting.

Sloan Program alumni work in a wide range of health-related careers, including hospitals and health networks, management consulting, long-term care, ambulatory services, pharmaceuticals, insurance/finance, government, academia, and professional organizations.

A few examples of Sloan Program graduates include:

Nancy Schlichting, a 1979 graduate and recently named to *Modern Health Care's* 100 Most Powerful People in Health Care, is chief executive officer of the Henry Ford Health System, which ranks among the nation's top integrated health systems. “My Cornell education has served me very well during my entire health care career,” Schlichting says. “I learned the fundamentals of leadership and the importance of public policy.”

Amit Mody, M.D., a 1994 graduate, is EVP/chief operating officer of St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford, Conn., which holds the unusual distinction of being a “Top 100 Hospital” in three different categories. “The Sloan Program gave me a solid foundation in hospital management principles and it taught me how, when, and of whom to ask pertinent critical questions,” Mody says. “It also provided an alumni network for entry into the market during the early part of my career, people to call to help solve problems along the way, and now, for recruitment to build future teams.”

Dan Hoffmann, a 1979 graduate and former secretary of health for Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge (and the first nonphysician to be appointed to that position), heads a large nonprofit for the Veterans Administration Health System. “My study of management principles at Sloan has served me well in guiding the operations of eight hospitals and 10 outpatient facilities as director of the VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network,” Hoffmann says. “Our service area covers some 8,500 square miles across Virginia, North Carolina, and West Virginia. Our focus here on measurable performance indicators provides me with the data needed to manage our array of resources in a manner that results in ‘gold standard’ health care for the veterans we so proudly serve.”

Alumni entrepreneurs include Bernie Kershner '64, who was a pioneer in the development of freestanding ambulatory

My study of management principles at Sloan has served me well in guiding the operations of eight hospitals and 10 outpatient facilities.”

—Dan Hoffmann,
1979 Sloan graduate

www.sloan.cornell.edu



surgery centers. He built and sold two substantial companies in the field and was the first nonphysician to head the professional association for ambulatory surgery programs. Kershner's current company recently developed a joint venture with the University of Connecticut Health Center. "From the point of view of personal development, the Sloan Program gave me the confidence to look beyond the obvious and never, never, never settle for anything," Kershner says.

Another innovator in the private sector is Fred Powell '70, who after building one company, founded a thriving chain of rehabilitation hospitals, while Mark Bertolini '84 has had a highly successful career in the insurance/financial services area as a CEO of a health plan, as a top executive at CIGNA, and most recently has helped bring about a dramatic turn-around at Aetna, where he is executive vice president.

"The focus of the Sloan Program is health management—it is not a health policy program," White says. "They learn about important policy issues in their courses and how policy decisions may impact on the environment they will be working in. But we do not provide in-depth training in policy analysis or the legislative process. We want leaders who can run organizations related to health."

While not the primary focus of Sloan, quite a number of graduates have gone on to successful careers as executives in the policy area. For example, Spencer Johnson '71, who is now CEO of Michigan Health and Hospital Association, was a former associate director of domestic policy at the White House. Another example of a graduate whose career has included activities in both the private and public sectors is John Norris '73, a joint Sloan/Law graduate who is currently involved with a number of pharmaceutical ventures, and who was previously the second in command at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and later executive vice president in charge of life sciences of Hill & Knowlton, one of the largest marketing consulting firms in the world.

"Administering a hospital requires many of the same skills it takes to run any large organization," White points out. But he says that there are also some important differences. Hospitals are not strictly top-down organizations; physicians and other health professionals have a substantial degree of autonomy. "To succeed, a hospital administrator must be able to work effectively with physicians and other professionals. Strong leadership skills are needed," he says.

Sloan Program students are exposed to the realities of the health care field through individual internships, site visits to Weill Cornell Medical Center and New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, and meetings in Washington, D.C., with policy makers, lobbyists, and legislative staff.

Another highlight of the curriculum is a capstone course that exposes students to projects that assess and recommend solutions for real-life situations facing health-related organizations. Recent examples of projects that Sloan students have worked on include:

- a community hospital must decide whether to upgrade or close its rehabilitation unit;
- a hospital wants to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a specialty heart center;
- a health system wants to develop a marketing plan for its home health program; and
- a hospital wonders if it is worthwhile to court patients from overseas.

At the heart of the Sloan Program education is Human Ecology's Department of Policy Analysis and Management (PAM), where Cornell is building one of the leading groups of health economists and health services researchers in the country.

Sloan students also draw on knowledge gleaned from Cornell's vast resources. Many take courses at the Johnson Graduate School of Management. Also figuring prominently in Sloan students' education are the School of Hotel Administration, the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, as well as other units in the College of Human Ecology such as the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis.

"Health care is one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy," White points out. "It has a high rate of growth. It has been very successful in assimilating new technologies and products. In 1980 it accounted for less than 9 percent of gross domestic product; 10 years ago it accounted for a bit over 13 percent; and by 2004 it was 16 percent. That's a big increase. We're skirting \$2 trillion per year," he says.

"The introduction of managed care sharply reduced the growth of prices for hospital services, especially in competitive markets. Physician compensation fell, too, especially for specialists. So there have been substantial challenges in how doctors practice medicine," he continues.

White says that growing managed care enrollments are associated with increasing consolidation in hospital markets and physicians' practices. And there is backlash from consumers to increase patients' choice of providers, which is spelling trouble for managed care.

White concludes: "In all of this, the big question for health care managers and policy makers alike is: where do we go next?"

One direction that many are working on is known as "consumer-directed health care"—on which Sloan hosted an academic conference in Ithaca last spring entitled "Consumers, Information, and the Evolving Health Care Marketplace." Although currently unlikely to be enacted, a "single payer" model of health insurance also is being discussed.

Meanwhile, quality issues are gaining growing attention, and there is wide interest in increasing the use of information technology in health care. No matter what direction things move, Sloan faculty, students, and alumni will be fully engaged in working to improve this dynamic part of our economy. ●●●

more information?

William D. White
Cornell University
Department of Policy Analysis
and Management
118 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, NY, 14853-4401
607-254-6476
wdw8@cornell.edu

Brooke Hollis
Cornell University
Department of Policy Analysis
and Management
102 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, NY, 14853-4401
607-254-8711
rbh25@cornell.edu

A leadership program in the Family Life Development Center trains senior Marines to mentor their fellow Marines in holding themselves to a respectful code of conduct toward women.

Mentoring Marines to Prevent Sexist and Violent Behavior against Women

BY METTA WINTER

The scenario titled “Illegal Motion” starts out like this: “At a party, you see a squad member trying to get an obviously drunk woman to have sex with him. She’s not just buzzed; she’s stumbling over her own feet. You know the woman—a civilian—and she seems reluctant.” The hypothetical bystanders are then asked: As a Marine, what should I do in this situation?

The only unacceptable option is to do nothing.

Getting men to step up to the plate when women are verbally harassed, and worse, is the idea behind a sports playbook of 13 scenarios depicting common forms of violence against women: from verbal harassment (“Talkin’ Trash”) and pressure for sex (“Blocking the Plate”) to battering (“Slapshot”) and gang rape (“Piling On”).

“Ninety percent of Marines have been in at least some of these situations,” writes one young Marine who took part in guided discussions that started with reading a scenario and imagining what he would do were he the unwitting witness. “The scenarios are right on target,” he goes on, “they put the person who needs to act in a gut-wrenching situation.”

And so they should do, explains Brian Leidy, principal investigator and director of the Family Life Development Center’s Mentors in Violence Prevention—Marine Corps (MVP–MC) Project. This program was created at the Corps’ request to ratchet-up male leadership in what has traditionally been characterized as “women issues.”

“Most men think that other men think a lot of this behavior is OK,” Leidy says. “They assume they are the only guy in the room who thinks it’s wrong.”

But participants quickly learn otherwise when their senior noncommissioned officers—who initiate the discussion—and their fellow Marines share what’s on their minds. A bystander’s “train of thought” is included to jumpstart the discussion as well as introduce key concepts, including relevant aspects of the military code and civilian law.

In the case of the “Illegal Motion” scenario, it goes like this:

“They’re both adults. But she can’t be fully consenting if she’s drunk, can she? What about my relationship to the guy? Is he older than me? What’s his rank? Does that matter? Will he even listen to me? Is it part of my responsibility as a squad member and/or friend to provide him with some guidance? After all, Marines are supposed to help Marines. What, if anything, am I supposed to do in a situation like this?”

When senior Marines put their junior Marines on the spot in this way, it sends a strong message that they don’t condone sexist or violent behavior. And it provides an opportunity for young men to discover a lot of their peers don’t either.

A list of options for action makes up the third component of the training. In this case, five suggested actions start the discussion and include talking to the squad member about intoxication and legal consent and urging one or more of the woman’s friends to take her home. The group is encouraged to come up with additional options. As each is discussed, senior Marines make clear which are the responsible choices.

“We know men will change their behavior if given ‘permission’ to do so by men with more status in the male hierarchy,” Leidy explains. “It imparts the idea that you don’t have to be the alpha male to step in.” >>>



more information?

Brian Leidy
Cornell University
Family Life Development Center
First Floor Beebe Hall
Ithaca, NY 14850

607-254-5114
bl15@cornell.edu

Marney Thomas
Cornell University
Family Life Development Center
First Floor Beebe Hall
Ithaca, NY, 14850

607-254-5124
mgt2@cornell.edu

What's more, the discussions serve to quell young men who might, themselves, be inclined to be disrespectful or abusive toward women, since they now know that their leaders disapprove and are watching. Also, playbook scenarios highlight the power of the bystander, sending the message loud and clear: if you don't contribute to the solution, you're contributing to the problem.

Even so, discussion leaders are trained not to shy away from talking through the real-world consequences of standing up against a fellow Marine, especially, says Leidy, when the guy is pursuing the kind of sexual conquests he's been brought up to believe are part and parcel of American manhood.

In male youth culture, late adolescents and young adults—who make up the Marine Corps talent pool—spend a lot of time coaching each other on how to “score,” Leidy points out. “Most times you aren't tagged a hero for being the stand-up guy, so we talk about that,” Leidy says. “There's a lot to overcome: fear of physical reprisals, of being ostracized.”

Yet Leidy counts on the fact that with the right modeling from senior Marines, a young man's pride in being a Marine and his desire to exemplify the Marine Corps Code of Conduct will win out.

“The code—honor, courage, and commitment—is a very high one,” Leidy says. “As part of it, Marines are taught moral courage, the responsibility to stand up and do the right thing, even if unpopular, and especially if it keeps another Marine from getting in trouble.”

Essential to Marines' toolbox Marine Corps Headquarters staff view MVP-MC training as an essential part of a Marine's toolbox, alongside knowing how to assemble their rifle. MVP-MC, which was first introduced into the Marine Corps in 1996 as part of a larger domestic violence prevention initiative, was thrust into greater prominence after the invasion of Iraq.

An alarming rise in sexual assaults in the war theater prompted the Department of Defense to convene a 90-day task force of all branches of the service in early 2004. Each service was directed to select and train uniformed victim advocates to provide support to military men and women in the field. One outcome for the Marine Corps was the creation of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, which now contracts for MVP-MC directly with the Family Life Development Center (FLDC).

“FLDC's extension audience is the men and women of the armed services and their families, wherever they are in the world,” says co-principal investigator Marney Thomas, a senior extension associate, who for the past 14 years has been director of FLDC Military Projects for the Army and Marine Corps.

Over the years the FLDC has created command briefings and training materials for military service members and military family support providers, conducted research on new parent support programs, studied various prevention strategies for child and spouse abuse, and is currently evaluating some of the effects



of parental deployment on family stress and coping. A major focus in the last several years has been to teach evaluation strategies to installation staff as they document outcomes for a wide variety of programs that support military families including coping with relocation and deployment, spouse employment, financial readiness, and special programs for families who have adults and children with exceptional needs.

Known for their expertise in advocacy in the areas of child and spouse abuse, Thomas and her military projects staff at FLDC were asked to develop the core training for the Army's

Unit Victim Advocates, uniformed personnel who support military victims of violence in a deployed environment. As a result of the new Department of Defense regulations, sexual assault victims in all services can choose to get confidential help without a requirement to report to law enforcement or the chain of command.

It's the FLDC's access to evidence-based information that the military finds so valuable.

“They see the university as being objective in providing the kind of training and technical assistance it offers; we're not invested in any one approach,” Thomas says.

Train the trainer The long-term goal of MVP-MC is to change the institutional culture of the Marine Corps. For this reason, the playbooks are introduced in a “train the trainer” format to instructors at all of the Marine Corps Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academies in the continental United States, Hawaii, and on Okinawa. As MVP-MC trainers, the Academy instructors then teach the program to senior enlisted personnel who come to the schools to take courses pursuant to a promotion to a higher rank. These individuals—sergeants, staff sergeants, and gunnery sergeants—then return to the fleet and use the concepts and playbooks with Marines under their immediate command.

To date, 2,350 Marines have been introduced to the program, and 600 Marines have been trained as trainers. More than 20,000 Marines have gone through the program and they are encouraged at the end of the session to keep the playbook in their locker and join the discussion whenever and wherever it occurs. (Training material also includes the legal definitions of assault, informed consent, rape, etc., which most young men don't know.)

Leidy administers pre-training attitude surveys and conducts evaluation interviews at the end of the two-day session, following up with the newly trained instructors over the next six months to document the implementation of the program. The program itself, the training sessions, and the materials all get high marks for effectiveness: Marines report awareness is heightened and behaviors changed. The materials are constantly evolving to reflect new situations and the changes mandated by the Department of Defense for restricted reporting and changing support systems for domestic violence and sexual assault victims.

“We've found the bystander approach, which doesn't point the finger at individuals, works with 90 to 95 percent of men,” Leidy notes. “It says, ‘We know most men and Marines are honorable people who will stand up and do the right thing.’” ●●●

1 Relatives as Parents

The number of grandparents stepping in to care for grandchildren when their own parents falter is startling. More than six million American children, 143,000 of them in New York State, are cared for by kin—most often grandparents—when divorce, death, immaturity, mental illness, teen pregnancy, substance and physical abuse, and even prison sentences render their own mothers and fathers unable to provide a stable and secure home.

In the three counties of the Mid-Hudson Valley alone, more than 4,500 grandparent caregivers face a host of challenges in caring for children who suffer from the loss of their own parents and are themselves often sick and disabled. How to afford the medical, psychological, and developmental services those children require without

jeopardizing their own financial footing is but one of the many issues with which grandparents receive guidance from Cornell Cooperative Extension's Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP).

Through informal get-togethers and one-on-one information sessions, RAPP offers personal and emotional support as well as an array of legal, financial, medical, advocacy, and networking information needed for individuals to be effective parents under those circumstances. All services are free.

The content of the RAPP program is disseminated through Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) educators in Orange, Ulster, and Dutchess counties (with similar efforts getting underway in 20 other CCE associations). Information is continually

3 Community Education Projects Lead the Way

revitalized by the latest research findings of college faculty, notes Josephine Swanson, associate director of Cornell Cooperative Extension and assistant dean of extension and outreach for the College of Human Ecology.

"In that way, it remains fresh and innovative because there is the constant infusion of new information," Swanson notes.

Rachel Dunifon, an associate professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management who is an expert in family social and economic well-being, is the

most recent faculty member to join the lead educator Denyse Variano of Orange County on the seven-year-old RAPP program. Dunifon recently received the prestigious W. T. Grant Young Scholars Award to conduct research on the role of grandparents in the lives of adolescent grandchildren.

"Being part of RAPP gives me a unique opportunity to take my research on grandparent caregivers and apply it to the 'real world,'" Dunifon says.

2 Energy Efficiency

Skyrocketing fuel bills create an urgent problem facing many New Yorkers. In response to this widespread problem, the internationally renowned housing specialist Joseph Laquatra, the Hazel E. Reed Human Ecology Extension Professor in Family Policy in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, spearheaded a partnership with the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) to create the Consumer Education Program for Residential Energy Efficiency.

"This program has mobilized our local associations of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) throughout New York State to respond effectively to concerns people have about rising energy costs. We are able to apply the latest research findings about energy efficiency to help people lower their bills by an average of 40 percent."

In 2003, the first year of the program, extension educators in 23 counties and New York City got the message out about how to become more energy efficient to 1.3 million homeowners, home buyers, tenants, students, and builders and other housing professionals. Today, that number has risen to 15 million individuals in 35 participating counties.

CCE educators—among them Jeanne Darling, executive director of CCE in Delaware County—conduct public education workshops, foster media contacts, and answer individuals' questions. In addition, they promote New York Energy \$martSM, a NYSERDA initiative that seeks to overcome market barriers, to increase supply, and to stimulate the demand for energy-efficiency products and services and renewable resource technologies. The New York Energy \$martSM Loan Program offers an interest rate reduction of up to 4 percent from participating lender rates to residential and commercial borrowers to encourage energy-efficient improvements and renewable technologies.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

3 Youth Development

Advancing Youth Development (AYD), another faculty-led Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) program, creates coalitions to bring broad-based support to individuals serving the needs of New York's youth population.

"The AYD Partnership demonstrates that cooperative leadership from state agencies and systems can provide efficient, low-cost, and high-quality professional development for adults who work with young people," says principal investigator Stephen Goggin, a senior extension associate in the Department of Human Development. The principal partnership members include CCE, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus, and ACT for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence located in the college's Family Life Development Center (FLDC). Jutta Dotterweich of the FLDC directs the program with Kay Telfer, Broome County CCE educator, as the co-director.

The program aims to institutionalize positive principles of youth development in New York State agencies, increase community networks that serve youth, and recognize and bolster the professionalism of youth workers. More than 2,200 community youth workers across the state have participated in AYD training, and interagency training teams deliver local training in virtually all New York State counties.

A recently completed five-year retrospective study makes clear the program works. Report data show that "youth workers are integrating new concepts in their work with youth, feel validated as professionals, and are moving from a problem focus to a mind-set that recognizes youth strengths, capabilities, creativity, and energy."

Graduate education and research in Human Ecology sharpen students' skills for success on the cutting edges of their fields.

Freedom and Guidance Allow Grad Students to Take the Lead

BY CLARE ULRICH

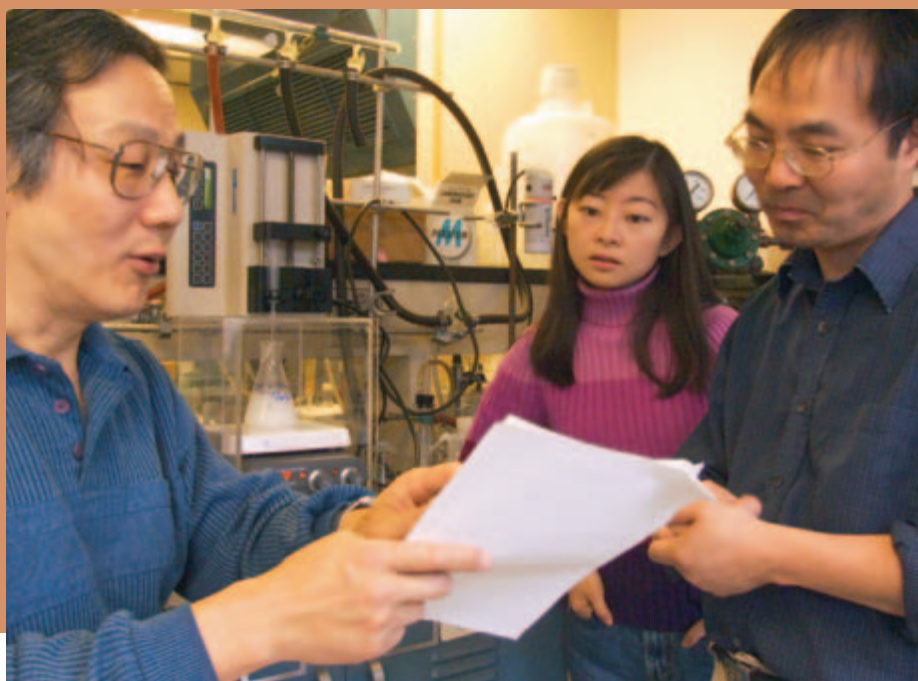
With 94 major fields of study, 16 minor fields, and 15 different degree programs, graduate study at Cornell isn't short on options. In the College of Human Ecology, in particular, where research is devoted to improving human life, faculty-student camaraderie is the norm, and graduate students are given just the right balance of guidance and freedom to become innovative thinkers and leaders in whatever profession they choose.

Research provides the training ground for our students," says Kay Obendorf, associate dean for research and professor of textiles and apparel. "Cornell faculty use their research to train new researchers. Because graduate education prepares tomorrow's leaders, we want that research to be grounded in theory and groundbreaking in its field."



It's not just academic ivory tower research, which is perfectly fine. Our field of study in fibers and apparel design has a real-life touch."

—C. C. Chu, professor in the Department of Textiles and Apparel, shown at left in the photograph mentoring graduate student Hua Song (center) and a former research associate in his lab.



Independent thinking

The Graduate School at Cornell does not impose any requirements for credits or courses. Students have the freedom to shape a course of study that cuts across disciplines while working within an academic framework that they develop with a committee of faculty advisers they choose. The College of Human Ecology has five distinct but interrelated departments from which to select an area of study, and students are typically encouraged to include committee members from outside the college.

“Leadership,” explains **Sheila Danko**, associate professor of design and environmental analysis and a J. Thomas Clark Professor of Entrepreneurship, “is about embracing new perspectives, seeing problems through other people’s eyes.” Danko herself has a diversified background, with training in graphic design from the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, a B.S. in architecture from the University of Michigan, and a master’s in industrial design from the Rhode Island School of Design. “One of the things we endeavor to teach our graduate students is to dig deeply into a question and go beyond the surface issues they’re familiar with. When you start to embrace a frame of reference that is foreign to you, it pushes you into a zone of discomfort that is really important for creative problem solving, and ultimately, leadership. Exploring how diverse points of view interact builds new perspectives, which are critical to leading research.”

Danko walks her talk. In 1997, she developed an introductory course called Making a Difference by Design. “Rather than merely teaching design concepts, I wanted to show that design can be a tool for change for biologists, lawyers, community activists, or business CEOs,” she explains. “I wanted to inspire students by showing them how leaders use design to make social changes, take risks, view the world imaginatively, and solve problems creatively.”

Matthew McIntyre, a 2003 graduate of the College of Human Ecology in interior design, became interested in Danko’s research after taking her course as an undergraduate. Studying with Danko was a chief reason he decided to continue his graduate studies at Cornell.

“At the same time,” McIntyre explains, “all these controversies were erupting about businesses that were just doing horrible things in the world. Looking at how much businesses focus on their bottom line got me really interested in the things companies were doing beyond their bottom line.”



The subject of his research is Ithaca Fine Chocolates, the first U.S. chocolate company to be Fair Trade Certified. The company’s supplier conducts business with small-scale cocoa farmers and enables them to remain self-sufficient by guaranteeing equitable prices. It also improves conditions in farmers’ communities by prohibiting forced child labor, promoting sustainable farming techniques that safeguard the environment, and helping to establish and support farmer-owned cooperatives. Farmers and their families are able to afford health care and education as a result of the business arrangement.

As a graduate student now, McIntyre is studying how a socially responsible company like Ithaca Fine Chocolates expresses its values to both internal (employees, artists, investors) and external (customers, suppliers, community) stakeholders, and how those values become the company’s marketing strategy. In addition to Danko, who chairs his graduate committee, McIntyre has chosen two professors from Cornell’s Johnson Graduate School of Management—Melissa Thomas-Hunt, who specializes in negotiation and team management, and Barbara Mink, who specializes in communications—as advisers.

“Matt is questioning traditional wisdom when it comes to marketing a product—that it’s not just about cost and quality,” Danko notes. “It’s about cost, quality, and ethics.”

Multidisciplinary One of the unique strengths of Cornell’s graduate program is that students are able to choose graduate committee members from faculty across the vast spectrum of disciplines at the university. Obendorf says that the intent of graduate education is to cultivate depth within a discipline while developing an understanding of its interface with other disciplines. All departments in the College of Human Ecology are multidisciplinary, meaning that researchers in more than one discipline come together to work on the solution of complex interdisciplinary problems. Thus, graduate students have the opportunity to experience the bringing together of different disciplines in a collaborative team effort of researchers strongly based in their respective disciplines. This can be compared to an interdisciplinary researcher who integrates elements of several disciplines to study an issue.



Research provides the training ground for our students,” says Kay Obendorf, associate dean for research and professor of textiles and apparel. “Cornell faculty use their research to train new researchers. Because graduate education prepares tomorrow’s leaders, we want that research to be grounded in theory and groundbreaking in its field.”



For example, “nutrition, by definition, is a multidisciplinary field,” says **Patrick Stover**, professor of nutritional biochemistry and director of the Division of Nutritional Sciences (DNS).

“We need to understand how nutrients interact with cells at a biochemical and at a genetic level. We need to understand how the biochemistry and the genetics affect public health, and how health issues affect public policy.

“We have nutrition students interacting with biochemistry students interacting with students in the neuroscience program. They work together and bring different perspectives that enable us to address problems in a unique way.”

With more than 45 faculty members, DNS is among the largest academic units in the United States devoted to the study of human nutrition. It rates as the premier nutrition department nationally and internationally according to the *Gourman Report*. Seven percent of all U.S. doctoral degrees in nutrition are granted by Cornell.

Anna Beaudin has taken advantage of the opportunities she has at Cornell to work with diverse faculty and to use an array of complex equipment. She came to Cornell after earning a master’s degree in neuroscience at Brown University. She works in Stover’s lab, investigating the role of folate (an essential B vitamin) metabolism in neural development and function, specifically in the context of memory, aging, and neuro-degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s. Her research interests encompass molecular biology, nutrition, and developmental biology.

“A lot of my positive experiences as a graduate student have to do with my adviser,” Beaudin says. “Patrick is really open to helping me do what I want to do. For example, if I were to tell him today that I want to go into biotechnology, he would make sure that in addition to getting the necessary academic training, I would also get the technical training I need to work in a biotech firm. The diversity of disciplines and freedom of choice here really allow me to pursue my own interests.” Beaudin uses facilities in four different buildings across three colleges. Her preliminary studies suggest she has already broken new research ground by uncovering, in a mouse model, the first neural tube defect phenotype associated with a specific metabolic pathway in folate metabolism.

Students like Beaudin with exploratory minds were one reason DNS now recommends that first-year students choose what they call a “mentoring team,” consisting of three faculty advisers rather than one appointed adviser. The exposure to a wider range of faculty research and advice in that critical first year has received positive feedback from students since the policy was implemented in fall 2005 and enables them to feel more confident about selecting a committee chair the following year.

Creativity/innovation “I personally think creativity is the most important thing for graduate education,” says **C. C. Chu**, professor of fiber science and biomedical engineering, who is also the director of graduate studies for the field of textiles in the Department of Textiles and Apparel (TXA). “Innovative thinking can be a creative design of either a piece of garment or of new fibers for a particular application. Most graduate studies result in an incremental advancement of knowledge, that is fine. However, I like to see our graduate students challenged to show their creativity, which can advance knowledge and products in leaps and bounds. We tailor each program, depending on a student’s level of creativity, so that he or she will definitely make a contribution to the advancement of knowledge.”

The embodiment of creativity himself, Chu holds 13 U.S. patents, primarily for novel biomaterials that are used for human body repair, such as vascular stents, for better drug delivery for treatment of illness like cancers, and to promote wound healing; he also has several U.S./international patents pending. Some of his licensed technologies are currently in clinical trials and have the real potential to benefit mankind. He recognizes the creativity of his graduate students by including them on patent royalty awards when they have contributed to a creative discovery.



Hua Song could be one of the next Chu protégés to turn academic research into benefiting human beings and to earn patent royalties. She has developed a promising new family of biodegradable polymers based on natural amino acids that are inexpensive to make and have the unique property of capturing DNA biomacromolecules. She’s testing their application to gene therapy via a collaboration with Weill Cornell Medical College, in particular, for targeted delivery of drugs to cells.

Song earned her undergraduate degree from Dong Hua University in Shanghai and her master’s degree in textile science from the University of Tennessee. Cornell was her top choice for doctoral study, mainly because of Chu, and Song was the recipient of the Cornell Liu’s Memorial Scholarship in 2005.

“Professor Chu always gives me as much freedom as I want,” she says. “He doesn’t set up a particular project for any of us. He always lets us choose anything we’re interested in first. Then he will look at it to see if it is workable or not. Nobody is bored. When you’re interested, you can do things better. I chose gene delivery because it is not as mature a field as others. It’s new and fresh and exciting.”

Chu thinks as highly of Song. “Ms. Song is able to design a group of new materials and make them work. You can dream of as many new ideas as you want, but when it comes down to getting your hands dirty to really make them work, it’s a completely different story. She can take a creative design on paper and make it work in the laboratory.”

That’s an important distinction for Chu. He prides himself that the field of textile research has the potential to benefit the real world. “It’s not just academic ivory tower research, which is perfectly fine,” he clarifies. “Our field of study in fibers and apparel design has a real-life touch.”

continued >>>

Incentives

Stimulate Faculty Leadership in Research

To encourage faculty members to do even more creative, collaborative, large-scale research, Lisa Staiano-Coico, the Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean of the College of Human Ecology, has introduced three initiatives with incentives. They reward those who work together across disciplines, apply for major grants, or submit grant proposals to senior colleagues for review.

"I wish to support the faculty as they pursue opportunities to work on significant societal problems," says the dean, who was formerly vice provost for medical affairs at Weill Cornell Medical College.

Dean Staiano-Coico and Professor Kay Obendorf, Human Ecology's associate dean for research, observe that almost every big problem in the college's purview requires the attention of more than one scientific discipline. Human Ecology issues are best addressed by bringing together economists, psychologists, sociologists, biologists, chemists, and/or designers.

"Of course, there are still fundamental questions in each of the disciplines—important and difficult questions that are not multidisciplinary," Obendorf says. "But the social problems we address are complex, and their solutions often require an integrated approach."

Thus, Staiano-Coico says, "We are providing financial incentives to seed cross fertilizations."

The **Research Environment Initiative** encourages a multidepartmental research environment. For example, the team working on "Evaluation of Multidisciplinary Strategies to Prevent Childhood Obesity among Low-Income Children" is composed of Division of Nutritional Sciences Associate Professor Jamie Dollahite and Research Associates Kate Dickin and Wendy Wolfe, Policy Analysis and Management Associate Professor Rachel Dunifon and Extension Associate Laura Colosi, and Extension Educator Carol Parker-Duncanson of Cornell Cooperative Extension in New York City.

"You have to remember that there is a time and energy cost in multidisciplinary research," Obendorf says. "If I am the principal investigator of a research project, I have to satisfy only myself and my reviewers. If I get involved in a project with collaborators, we all have to agree on objectives and methods and have something appropriate for each of the participants," she points out. "That complicates the project, and sometimes the necessary time commitment might discourage some people."

Therefore, the dean's office is making available seed money for the formation of groups. "This is a way to invest in the group approach, by providing resources for initiation of a multidisciplinary research group," Obendorf says.

Human Development Professor Karl Pillemer, who is a sociologist by training, has reached over to Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to work with Development Sociology Professor Max Pfeffer and Senior Extension Associate Linda Wagenet on "Aging and the Environment: Promoting Environmental Civic Engagement and Volunteering among the Elderly."

A third group that has applied to the program will study "Economic Analysis of the Impact of Food Advertisements on Youth Consumption." The group comprises Policy Analysis and Management Professors John Cawley, Donald Kenkel, and Alan Mathios, and Senior Research Associate Dean Lillard, who are economists; and Professor Rosemary Avery, who is trained in family resource management.

The three new initiatives:

- Research Environment Initiative
- Faculty Grant Development Program
- Award Program in Recognition of Program Project and Center Grants

The college's second initiative to encourage faculty leadership in research provides funds to principal investigators so they can offer an honorarium to a senior colleague, preferably a well-placed person in their field, to review their grant application, either before submission to a granting agency or after reviewers' comments have been received.

"The **Faculty Grant Development Program** is not an editorial review, not a mentoring review, not even only a scientific review," Obendorf says. "It's a review to bring the application in line with the priorities of a granting agency."

The review is completely voluntary, faculty members decide to use the opportunity or not, and they select the person to review their submission.

"The objective is to get on the agenda of a granting agency with an innovative proposal of research. Ideally, the reader would be a high-level person who is familiar with the operations of a particular granting agency," Obendorf explains.

In 2005, the Faculty Grant Development was used by five faculty members. It is too early to tell if their submissions were successful.

The last of the three initiatives, the **Award Program in Recognition of Program Project and Center Grants**, rewards a faculty member who was awarded big grants for a research group or center. The reward is extra, flexible money that a faculty member can use to offset the added burdens of administering a huge grant. For example, it might be necessary to hire a teaching or research assistant or a temporary administrative assistant, or to attend or send a graduate student or postdoc to a professional meeting.

"We certainly want people to take on big, important projects," Obendorf says. "It's \$15,000 for any legitimate expenses that are not covered by a granting agency or for something that someone forgot to include in their application. This award is meant to be in recognition of outstanding contributions to the research and graduate student training mission of the college."

● CAROLE STONE

Teaching As a teaching assistant, Hua Song and another student developed a new undergraduate TXA lab course, which they team taught for three semesters. Having never taught before, she was a bit overwhelmed at first. “They [undergraduates] believe whatever you say, so I had to be very responsible to try my very best to teach them the truth.” Song gets a kick out of how friendly her former students are when they run into her. “That feels good,” she says.

Matthew McIntyre also received financial support by serving as a teaching assistant his first year for a large, 300-student, undergraduate lecture course taught by Sheila Danko. “That was a great learning experience,” he says. “It was really good to work in a team environment with my adviser and see her pedagogy.” When Danko went on leave his second semester, McIntyre assisted the three visiting professors who replaced her. That same semester, he also served as a teaching assistant for two graduate courses taught by two other DEA faculty members. “It was interesting to try to help them with a curriculum I was very familiar with,” he admits. Comparing undergraduate- and graduate-level course preparation as well as different teaching styles piqued his interest in teaching, which is a career option he’s considering.

Teaching assistantships provide excellent opportunities for students to build a strong mentoring relationship with a faculty member. As happened with McIntyre, situations often occur where the teaching assistant can step in and provide some real assistance to a faculty member teaching a course. Acquiring firsthand experience with the teaching profession is one obvious benefit, but the personal growth students gain from being challenged to know their field well enough to teach and advise undergraduates is one of the intangibles that develop confidence and nurture leadership.

Preparing students to leave “Human Ecology attracts people who are independent thinkers,” says Christine Olson, director of graduate studies in DNS, “people who know what they want and know where they’re going. Those traits are further developed by the structure of our program. We train students not only to be at the cutting edge of research in academia, but also to influence their profession.”

The Division of Nutritional Sciences requires its graduate students to teach, and Anna Beaudin held a teaching assistantship her first semester. She is now supported by a training grant, Maternal and Child Nutrition (MCN), a program funded through the National Institutes for Health and now in its 17th year at Cornell. The MCN training grant is geared toward training researchers, and Beaudin’s award pays her tuition costs and provides her with a stipend and some research support. Beaudin also attends a weekly group meeting run by several MCN faculty members as a way to familiarize students with current research in this subfield of nutrition. It also provides students with opportunities to present their own research and obtain feedback from a specialized audience.

Design and Environmental Analysis encourages its second-year graduate students to publicly present their research. “Faculty from the entire department will ask questions about your research and try to get you to think from a different perspective or more deeply,” McIntyre says. “It was a valuable experience that helped me focus. It really pushed me to understand where I was going and the direction I was taking.”

Thomas Fuller-Rowell in Human Development gained insight into what he wants to do while he was conducting his master’s degree research on youth programs in the South Bronx last summer. “I’m an applied kind of a researcher,” he says. “I am interested in understanding how social systems function and in designing ways to develop those systems so that they can serve youth more effectively. I would like to direct projects like that.”

Programs are also in place across the departments for students who are about to leave graduate studies for the workforce. In the Department of Policy Analysis and Management, for instance, Associate Professor John Cawley is helping to organize a job market service for graduating PAM students. Others have formed a placement committee to help students network with professionals and learn of positions in the field—not just in academia, but government and private-sector jobs as well. Résumé and curriculum vitae preparation along with mock interviews are sharpening their competitive edge.

“I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else,” says Julie Carmalt, a PAM student doing research on obesity. “Cornell was the most challenging program I could have selected, and I’m glad I did.”

Tamara Pardo agrees. “I thank my lucky stars every day that I have the opportunity to be a part of it all.” ●●●



I love the active process of learning,” says Tamara Pardo, a first-year graduate student in Human Development researching transgender identity formation. Her adviser, Ritch Savin-Williams, chair of the Department of Human Development, believes she holds great potential to be a research celebrity in the field. “I don’t think I would have this degree of support anywhere else,” Pardo adds.

more information?

Kay Obendorf
Cornell University
Department of Textiles and Apparel
187 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853-4401
607-255-4719
sko3@cornell.edu

Teaching is the *raison d'être* of a university like Cornell: if it weren't for students, the university's 1,500-plus professors on the Ithaca campus would make up the world's biggest think-tank on a hill. And when it comes to teaching and winning awards to show for it, the College of Human Ecology's 100-plus professors earn their share of glory.

Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellowships may be the most coveted teaching awards on campus: they carry a \$5,000 award for five years for each faculty member. The two most recent recipients include Jeffrey Haugaard, Human Development (2000), and Rosemary Avery, Policy Analysis and Management (2001).

"My teaching about human development includes three themes," Haugaard says. "First, there are no easy answers. No one has yet developed a consummate theory of human development. Anyone who tells you that there is only one correct way of understanding any aspect of human behavior is fooling you. Second, competent scientific inquiry is our best tool for understanding human development. Good science and bad science exist, and one must learn to distinguish them. Third, in one's work and learning it is important always to be humane. The foundation of our work is people, not data."

The Weiss Fellowship recognizes effective, inspiring, and distinguished teaching and excellence in advising as well as outstanding efforts toward instructional improvement and development. Weiss fellows are nominated by a committee of students and faculty and selected by Cornell's president.

For a faculty member to be named by a Merrill Presidential Scholar is another honor recognized across the university. Each spring, some 36 students, or approximately 1 percent of the graduating class, are named Merrill Presidential Scholars by the deans of the undergraduate colleges. Merrill scholars, in turn, recognize a high school teacher who most inspired their scholastic development and a Cornell faculty member who most significantly contributed to their college education and experience.

Faculty members in the College of Human Ecology who have been named by Merrill Presidential Scholars include

Rosemary Avery **Donald Barr** **Sam Beck**
Franklin Becker **Carole Bisogni** **Joan Brumberg**
Richard Canfield **Stephen Ceci** **Shelia Danko**
Richard Depue **Gary Evans** **Jennifer Gerner**
Jeffrey Haugaard **Cindy Hazan** **Marie Kamp**
Barbara Koslowski **David Levitsky** **Barbara Lust**
Lorraine Maxwell **Scott Maynes** **Steven Robertson**
William Rosen **Judith Ross-Bernstein**
Christine Schelhas-Miller **Jeffrey Sobal**
Patrick Stover **Virginia Utermohlen** **Elaine Wethington**

The Merrill Scholarship provides a \$4,000 scholarship for a financially needy Cornell student from the teacher's high school or geographical area. Cornell faculty members receive honor from the prestige of the award.

Rosemary Avery, who has won this award several times, and many other teaching awards, believes that the teacher-student relationship is at the core of a quality education. She says, "In my teaching, I make the forging of these relationships a top priority. At the heart of my teaching philosophy is a commitment to reach every student in my classes and foster their individual development toward excellence while offering them as much support and encouragement as I can along the way.

"In addition I believe that learning should be functional and fun. Tying knowledge to real-world applications brings integrity to both the teaching and learning environments. Enthusiasm and humor are infectious, and I try to make both an integral part of my classroom efforts."



In each of the schools in the State University of New York system, including the College of Human Ecology, a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching is given. Two college faculty members who were award winners in the two previous years and three undergraduates elected for one-year terms by the student body solicit nominations, evaluate them, and make a recommendation to the dean of the college. Recent winners of this award include

Rosemary Avery
Stephen Ceci
Margaret Frey
Jeffrey Haugaard
Cindy Hazan
Christine Schelhas-Miller
Elise Temple

In addition to all these well-known awards for undergraduate teaching, many more exist. Honor society Kappa Omicron Nu and the Human Ecology Alumni Association present an award each year for superior advising, and Gamma Sigma Delta, also an honor society, gives an award for distinguished teaching.

Gary Evans, Design and Environmental Analysis and Human Development, won the Cornell Class of '72 Award for Academic Innovation in 2002; he was in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*, 1998; and he won the Standard Oil Distinguished Teaching Fellowship in 1974. "We underestimate the value of affect and emotion in university education. Helping to link knowledge, ideas, and new perspectives to what students already know and are interested in is critical to supporting intellectual growth," Evans says.

In 2005, William Rosen, Policy Analysis and Management, received the New York State Assembly Recognition as Teacher and Mentor in the Capital Semester Program.

Human Ecology faculty have also been recognized for outstanding advising, which is, of course, intertwined with teaching. The most recent recipients of the Kendall S. Carpenter Memorial Advising award are Carole Bisogni, Gary Evans, and Alan Mathios.

● CAROLE STONE

The college's alumni become leaders in their fields, using the skills and knowledge they attained at Cornell as a foundation.

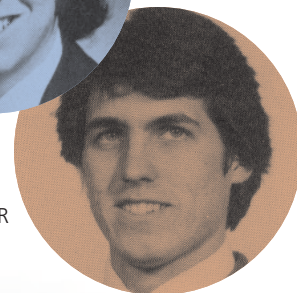
Three at the Top

BY CLARE ULRICH

The College of Human Ecology has always provided an education that balances theory and practice. Its location within Cornell University, commitment to the university's land-grant mission to serve the public, and inspirational teachers offer students academic and extracurricular opportunities limited only by the imagination. Here, we profile three alumni, graduating from different programs in vastly different eras, whose soaring careers share a common grounding in their Cornell experiences. >>>



MICHAEL FOSTER '75,
JD '78



JON VOLLMER
MHA '81



LUCY JARVIS '38

Commanding Performances

Lucy Jarvis '38

The 1930s wasn't the most encouraging era for women professionals—nor were the three decades following. But the degree in nutrition that Lucy Jarvis earned from the then College of Home Economics turned out to be one of the first stepping stones on her path to a distinguished career—not in medicine or dietetics—but in television production.

Jarvis credits her mother with giving her attitude. “She made me believe there was nothing I couldn't do, and I believed it and, therefore, did it,” she recalls. Alice Burgoin, Jarvis's undergraduate adviser at Cornell, sharpened the edge. “She encouraged us to utilize all the opportunities at the university because you never knew when they were going to be of value to you in the rest of your life.”

Then there were “forces” like Alexander Drummond, professor of speech and director of the Cornell Dramatic Club, who put Jarvis's confidence to the test. “He was a shocking experience,” she recalls of the 6-foot-4 giant who walked with crutches because of a paralyzed leg. “And he had an enormous voice,” she continues. “But his course gave me the skills and cues I would need to speak publicly. I can get up anywhere now and speak at the drop of a syllable.”

Jarvis worked summers in the dietetics division of New York Hospital, which was Cornell Medical School. When she graduated, they offered her a position as a nutritionist. Once there, she was appalled to learn that the doctors never studied nutrition. So she lobbied the hospital to allow her to teach a course on nutrition, then insisted that new residents take it before they could eat in the dining hall, which she ran.

A few years later, a contact at the hospital encouraged Jarvis to apply for a food editor position with *McCall's* magazine, which she got. *McCall's* sent her to Columbia University to earn her master's in food and nutrition. Her visibility increased as she traveled around the country for the magazine, and soon local radio and television stations were asking Jarvis to talk about nutrition on the air. That's when she realized the power of television to reach a broad and vast audience. “I have something I want to say,” she thought in those early years. “And the place for me to do that is on television.”

While she was mulling this over, she left the work force and New York City for eight years to raise two children in Connecticut, “enjoying every minute of it.” When the children were old enough to attend school, she volunteered to work with the Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT). Here she got her first taste of film production when she made *Passport to Freedom*, a documentary on ORT's global efforts to provide skills training to war refugees, primarily Jews, taking them, as Jarvis poetically puts it, “from hopelessness to education to a new place of living, a new home, and a new hope.”

When she returned to work full time in 1957, it was to produce a daily television program called *Capitol Close-up* with Martha Roundtree, creator of *Meet the Press*. The intent was to give viewers a glimpse of behind-the-scenes Washington. The program's first guests were President Dwight Eisenhower,

Vice President Richard Nixon, and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, giving his only television interview ever.

Jarvis's success prompted David Susskind to invite her to work for him. Committed not to leave Roundtree in the lurch, Jarvis devoted evenings and weekends to Susskind's *Playhouse 90* and *Armstrong Theater*. Two years later she joined NBC as assistant producer for *The Nation's Future*, a broadcast of debates on controversial topics. In 1961 NBC made her full producer, a first in the industry for a woman.

Jarvis stayed with NBC for 18 years, creating documentaries such as the Emmy-winning *The Kremlin*, for which she remains the first and last person allowed to film there. Her next project took her inside the Louvre—another first for filmmakers. When the curators became worried that the camera lights might damage the collections, Jarvis reassured them by saying, “If Khrushchev trusted me, why can't you?” *The Louvre* aired in 1963–1964 and won six Emmys, a Peabody, a Radio-TV Critics Award, and France's prestigious Order of Arts and Letters.

Jarvis's nutrition background guided her in these years, too. Her 1965 *Who Shall Live?* exposed inequities in patient access to kidney dialysis treatment and prompted the U.S. government to budget \$6 million to establish dialysis centers throughout the country. Another Jarvis breakthrough was her 1968 filming of Dr. Christian Barnard's first heart transplant operation in South Africa, with an interview afterward. In 1973 she became the first Westerner allowed to film in Communist China.

In 1976 Jarvis left NBC for ABC to produce *The Barbara Walters Television Specials*. Not long afterward, she became the first woman to start her

own production company, Creative Projects, Inc. On her own she continued to produce documentaries but also tried her hand at fictional films such as *Family Reunion*, starring Bette Davis. In 1987 she formed Jarvis Theater and Film Limited, which produced the first collaborative U.S.–Soviet musical of Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies* in Moscow and brought the Russian rock opera *Junon and Avos* to New York City.

Jarvis recently merged her two companies into Jarvis Productions Limited. She's excited about a Broadway production she's working on called *Duke and the Duchess*, which tells the story of a Russian war-relief effort that Eleanor Roosevelt launched with Duke Ellington. (“The Duchess” was the FBI's code name for Roosevelt when she was first lady.) At the time, black orchestras were restricted from performing at Carnegie Hall, but with Roosevelt's intervention, Ellington made history and paved the way for others.

Jarvis met Eleanor Roosevelt at Cornell when the great lady agreed to model her governor's inaugural gown for a fashion show organized by the apparel design class Jarvis was taking.

“My projects always have to have a social motivation for me or they're just jobs,” she admits. “I wanted to do one more fascinating, wonderful story,” she says of the new play. “It somehow completes the circle.”

Jarvis stayed with NBC for 18 years, creating documentaries such as the Emmy-winning *The Kremlin*, for which she remains the first and last person allowed to film there.

From Tumultuous Times to Secure Investments

Michael J. Foster '75, JD '78

In the fall of 1971, Michael Foster was one of the first men to enroll in the newly named College of Human Ecology. It was a period of national turmoil and transition on many fronts. The Vietnam War was being vehemently protested, the Kent State tragedy had occurred the previous spring, the Attica uprising coincided with the beginning of Foster's first semester, Watergate would emerge a year later, and a year after that the first oil crisis would hit the American economy hard.

"When I went to college a lot of cultural changes were taking place in this country," Foster recalls. "Human Ecology was a school undergoing a huge transition. The change from all women to a coed college was just occurring, but because it affected only a part of Cornell, I didn't sense that I was one of a handful of men in a school of women."

He started as a Human Development major but took an economics course his freshman year that convinced him to switch majors to Consumer Economics and Public Policy, which has since evolved into the Department of Policy Analysis and Management.

For most of his undergraduate years, Foster represented the College of Human Ecology on the University Senate. Early in his role as a senator, students took over Carpenter Hall, and Foster volunteered to serve with others as a negotiator between the students and the administration.

"It was the spring of 1972," he recalls. "It was an antiwar protest against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, and the students renamed Carpenter Hall after a general in the North Vietnamese army. It was similar to what was happening on campuses all around the country, and it went on for several days. We weren't sure if it was going to escalate and end up shutting down the university just as finals were approaching. We wanted the students to negotiate peacefully with the administrators to prevent the campus police from coming in and throwing everybody out. We were successful. It ended without any violence."

Foster became interested in campus housing issues and chaired the Senate Housing Subcommittee and co-chaired the Campus Life Committee.

"I wanted to help Cornell move to a system where it provided more and better housing on campus for students," he explains. "Even though I was a fraternity member, I didn't believe fraternities were for everybody and thought there was too much reliance on the

Greek system as a housing option, rather than a social option, for students," Foster says.

"Certainly, the trend was already changing at that point, and I spent a lot of time from late freshman year through my senior year working with the Dean of Students Office, looking at how other universities were handling new options for on-campus student housing," he continues. "It was important because the beginning of each year always brought a housing crisis. Freshmen were spread all over campus. A couple hundred students at a time would be living in lounges until vacant rooms could be found. It was a terrible way for them to begin their college careers." He's pleased with the new living options on North and West Campuses.

Immediately after completing his undergraduate degree, Foster enrolled in Cornell Law School and earned his J.D. After law school he practiced at Debevoise & Plimpton, and later as a partner of O'Sullivan Graev & Karabell, a New York City law firm specializing in corporate finance. He joined RFE Investment Partners as a general partner in 1989, after having represented the firm for over seven years.

"RFE is a private equity investment firm that acquires growing companies valued in the \$20–\$100 million range. While our investments cover a wide array of industries, we have been active for a number of years in the health care services area. While most of our companies are private, some are public, such as Sun Healthcare Group, a large nationwide provider of services, mostly to the elderly, with over 160 nursing and assisted living facilities nationwide," he says.

Foster oversees the management of the firm's portfolio companies. He admits that his Human Ecology foundation has played a role in some of the investment choices he makes, and he firmly believes that all students should have some grounding in public policy to better understand the context of whatever profession they choose to pursue.

"Sometimes you don't realize what you're learning until later," he confesses. "Now, particularly with my involvement in a number of health care-related companies, my public policy education really comes full circle. When I was in school 35 years ago studying Medicare and Medicaid policies and how we deal with the elderly or the disabled, or trying to understand what government's role can or should be in providing basic services to needy populations, I couldn't fully appreciate the relevance that my course work would have to so many of the issues that I face at work today. I like to think that I had a social awareness before I came to Human Ecology, but I certainly believe the college cemented it. It has left a lasting impression."

"I like to think that I had a social awareness before I came to Human Ecology, but I certainly believe the college cemented it."



Jon Vollmer MHA '81

Nonurban Legend



Jon Vollmer, a 1981 graduate of the Sloan Program in Health Administration, grew up in a rural community in Western Michigan called Spring Lake. Visitors are greeted with a sign that says, "Welcome to Spring Lake, where nature smiles for seven miles."

These days Vollmer elicits smiles himself. He is executive vice president of hospital operations for Health Management Associates, Inc. (HMA), which operates 60 acute-care hospitals in nonurban locations in the southern United States; Vollmer is in charge of half of them.

"I'm responsible for making sure the hospitals are operating well and that we have a good, strong administrative team in place that is in touch with the physicians, working with the medical staff, recruiting to fill the communities' needs for health care services, and expanding the services and the role of the hospital in the community," he explains.

In the 14 years since he joined HMA, the company has enjoyed uninterrupted earnings growth. In the past six years alone, HMA acquired 23 hospitals, increasing its total number of beds from 4,665 to 8,310 and its revenues from \$1.4 billion to \$3.6 billion. HMA knows what it's doing, and Vollmer is one of the reasons why.

"Our philosophy is to deliver high-quality health care close to home," he says. "We look for communities that have not been adequately served by local physicians. They promise growth potential and the opportunity for us to become the preferred provider. But when we come in and acquire a hospital, especially if it's faltering, we also strengthen and stabilize the community. I would say that in every situation so far, five years after we begin managing a hospital, we're employing more people than when we acquired it."

In Clarksdale, Mississippi, for example, HMA transformed an impoverished, county-owned hospital that was struggling with a 10-year plan to renovate its facility. Within 11 months after HMA arrived, construction was completed and new jobs were filled. The hospital administrator even resurrected the community's annual holiday parade.

Last year HMA recruited 300 new physicians. HMA has also met the challenge of getting private-practice physicians to use the hospital's facilities. Vollmer developed a service called One-Call Scheduling that has worked like a charm. HMA provides physicians with a preprinted checklist of all the possible tests they may want to order for a patient. On the inside of the form are instructions on what the patient needs to do to prepare for each test and hospital contact numbers. The ease and time-saving advantages have resulted in grateful physicians sending more patients to HMA hospitals.

"You have to pay attention to this kind of detail," Vollmer advises, which he says he learned quite by accident, and then tells a story.

"One day I saw phone books arrive at one of our hospitals," he began.

"I noticed they were starting to curl in the Florida sun, and I talked to the materials manager about getting them delivered to the patients' rooms. She said, 'Fine,' but never got around to it. So I said I would do it, which was not a good time management decision, but I nevertheless learned something very important that day distributing those phone books. I found phone books in the rooms that were five, six, and even ten years old, and I thought, 'If you're a patient sitting in bed waiting for surgery, and you pull out the phone book for whatever reason, and the cover is torn and the information old, you start wondering about other things,

such as what the nurses are like and how clean the O.R. is.' They have nothing to do with each other, but it's that level of detail that's so very, very important in a health care organization."

Simplifying processes helps, too. Vollmer implemented programs that dramatically shorten the amount of time it takes a patient to be admitted to the hospital and improve the accuracy of the information. HMA insists that the first person a patient talks to when he or she enters the Emergency Room is not a clerk, but a nurse. The nurse enters information about the patient into a computer program called ProMed, which quickly identifies any tests the patient may need. These tests are immediately ordered. By the time the patient sees a doctor, the tests are ready for interpretation.

"This helps standardize and improve the quality of care while allowing the physician to practice the art of medicine," Vollmer explains.

Patients' demographic data are also bar-coded onto a credit-card-size Med-Key™ card that can be scanned and verified upon arrival, shortening admission time to about three minutes.

"The thing that fascinates me about hospitals is how complex an organization they are," Vollmer says. "You have patients who are coming here to get better, physicians, employees, board of trustee members, volunteers, community members—all these folks coming together. I see the job of hospital administrator as taking that organization and trying to make it work well and improving it for the benefit of all those involved."

He says the Sloan Program provided him with a perfect blend of the knowledge and hands-on experiences he needed to succeed in health care.

"I thought it was fantastic," he says. "It's a very broad program that covers all the really important topics. After all, we've been doing it longer than anyone else. (The Sloan Program recently turned 50.) And then to be connected to a great university like Cornell, you can't go wrong." ●●●

"Our philosophy is to deliver high-quality health care close to home. We look for communities that have not been adequately served by local physicians."



What's new. . .

Seniors Raising Children Get Support from Cornell Cooperative Extension

Millions of grandparents are raising grandchildren and finding it much harder than raising their own children. Grandparents have lower energy levels; their discipline techniques can be outdated; their adult children often have serious problems; and orphaned grandchildren suffer from profound grief.

Help is available with Cornell Cooperative Extension's (CCE) "Parenting a Second Time Around" (PASTA), a program that provides support, parenting skills, and critical legal information and communication skills to grandparents as well as other relatives raising children.

This award-winning, 200-page curriculum, developed by retired Cornell human development faculty member Jennifer Birckmayer, has been so successful in New York's Orange County that the full program will soon expand into additional counties in the Hudson Valley, thanks to a recent grant from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

The program, in one form or another, is used in more than a dozen New York counties and two dozen states, says Denyse Variano, a senior extension resource educator at CCE in Orange County, who helped co-author the curriculum with Birckmayer and two colleagues

in consultation with Susan Hicks and Herb Engman, Cornell human development faculty members. PASTA is part of CCE's "Relatives as Parents Program."

"We thought we were the only grandparents doing this," said Bill O'Toole, a retired technical office worker in Chester, N.Y. He and his wife have been raising their granddaughter, now 13, since she was 3. The senior O'Tooles became involved with CCE's kincare program when it started eight years ago, and they still attend monthly meetings. "It helps to meet other grandparents in the same position and share our stories. I've also gotten great advice there," O'Toole said.

PASTA covers child development, authoritative discipline, rebuilding a family, legal issues and advocacy, mental health concerns, how to discuss sensitive issues, and how to access legal, medical, social, and educational services.

Copies of the PASTA curriculum, which was co-authored by Isabelle Jensen of CCE in Ontario County and Jan Cohen of CCE in Broome County, are for sale from Cornell's Resource Center (607-255-2080; resctr@cornell.edu; <http://legacy.cce.cornell.edu/store/customer/home.php>). ●



Not Enough to Eat Can Impair Reading and Math Skills

When young school-age children do not always have enough to eat, their academic development—especially reading—suffers, according to a new longitudinal Cornell study.

The research provides the strongest evidence to date that food insecurity has specific developmental consequences for children. Food insecurity is defined as households having limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate or safe foods.

"We found that reading development, in particular, is affected in girls, though the mathematical skills of food-insecure children entering kindergarten also tend to develop significantly more slowly than other children's," said Edward Frongillo, associate professor of nutritional sciences in the College of Human Ecology. The study also found that girls' social skills suffer when families that have been food secure become food insecure while the child is in the early primary grades.

"In addition, we found that kindergarten girls from food-insecure families tend to gain more weight than other girls, which may put them at risk for obesity as adults," he said.

Frongillo, Cornell graduate student Diana Jyoti, who received her master's degree in January, and Sonya Jones of the University of South Carolina analyzed data from the U.S. Department of Education's Early Childhood Longitudinal Study on about 21,000 children who entered kindergarten in 1998 and were followed through third grade. The study was published in the December 2005 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition* (135:12).

"Despite federal food assistance and private charitable programs, food insecurity is a persistent national problem," said Frongillo, noting that it affects 12 percent of all households and 18 percent of households with children. ●

Award Granted to Develop Filters against Avian Flu and SARS

To develop nanofibers potentially capable of filtering out viruses, bacteria, and hazardous nanoparticles, Juan P. Hinestroza, assistant professor in the fiber science program of Human Ecology's Department of Textiles and Apparel, has won a James D. Watson Investigator Award for \$200,000 over two years from the New York State Office of Science, Technology, and Academic Research.

Hinestroza plans to develop a high-tech, nanoscale fiber spinning process capable of producing nanofibers for high-performance filtration of contaminants, biological agents, and hazardous but very small particles. It is expected that such novel filtration systems will be capable of providing protection against such hazardous substances as toxic mold and infectious agents, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the H5N1 strain of avian influenza.

Hinestroza, who joined the Cornell faculty this past fall, focuses his research on understanding complex phenomena at the nanoscale that are of fundamental relevance to fiber science. Some of his work includes the use of self-assembly and atomic layer deposition methods to develop smart textiles as well as the production of polymeric multifunctional nanofibers.

The purpose of the James D. Watson Investigator Program is to assist New York's leading research institutions to recognize, retain, and professionally develop early-career scientists who demonstrate leadership potential at the frontier of knowledge in the life sciences and to conduct research that is anticipated to enhance economic development in the state.

● SUSAN S. LANG

Design Class Installation Alters Perception of Spaces

An exhibit called *Rites of Passage* was installed this past fall by sophomores in a design studio course taught by Design and Environmental Analysis Professor Jan Jennings. The students used techniques from a traditional 15th-century Japanese tea house method, which creates new spaces by “slowing time down” through obstruction of movement.

Jennings explains: “In other words, you enlarge small spaces experientially, such as the Japanese did with elongated passages to Shinto tea houses.” The 20 students in Jennings’s course worked together to design the exhibition, held in the Martha Van Rensselaer Hall studio room 408.

“In their full-scale designs, the students used materials innovatively to configure pathways from outside the room to the inside,” Jennings says. “For example, students executed the ‘mouse-hole’ technique using bands of Lycra, in which visitors had to bend down slightly to enter, emulating the crawl space in Japanese tea houses.”

The designs called attention to a body’s movement through space with a space tunnel darkened with walls of Flex-force trash bags and a zig-zag turn with recycled cardboard walls. The exhibit also included alternating physical constraints; an interlude, defined by a low-hanging polyurethane tarp; and borrowed scenery and framed views. Visitors left the room through a hidden door and by another pathway different from the one they had entered.

“This was an amazing project, the best in my 13 years of teaching at Cornell,” Jennings says.

● SUSAN S. LANG

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