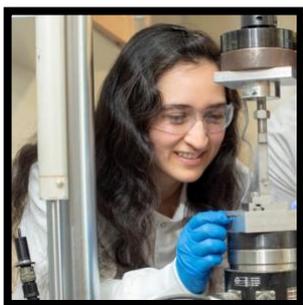


# Graduate Student Highlights

July 2020 – September 2020

## Graduate School News

### Three Doctoral Students Receive Ford Fellowships



Three doctoral students have been selected to receive 2020 Ford Foundation Fellowships: Macy Castaneda and Drea Darby received predoctoral competition fellowships, and Victoria Ortega received a dissertation competition fellowship. Honorable mentions were awarded to 15 additional Cornell graduate students. The fellowship program aims to increase the diversity of university faculties.

[Read the full story](#)

### Two Doctoral Alumnae Named Mellon/ACLS Public Fellows



Two doctoral alumnae have been named 2020 Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Public Fellows: Yagna Nag Chowdhuri, Ph.D. '20, a recent graduate of the Asian literature, religion, and culture doctoral program, and Valeria Dani, Ph.D. '19, a graduate of the romance studies doctoral program. As fellows, they have been placed in staff positions for two-year appointments.

[Read the full story](#)

### 'Making it Work': Flexibility During COVID-19



COVID-19 altered the plans of many. For Cornell graduate students, this translated to canceled research travel and restricted lab access, among other roadblocks to degree progress. Doctoral students Emily Donald and Jason Chang reflect on their experiences during the Spring and Summer 2020 semesters and how they adapted to the circumstances to continue making degree progress.

[Read the full story](#)

## Alumna Stresses Importance of Networking – Even in a Pandemic



At the 2020 Summer Success Symposium, mechanical engineering alumna Malika Grayson, M.S. '14, Ph.D. '16, shared the message with students that networking is important – even during today's circumstances. Through personal anecdotes and advice, she coached students in attendance on how to build their networks, identify mentors, and maintain those relationships.

[Read the full story](#)

## Seven Graduate Students Receive Wu Scholarships



Seven graduate students received 2020 Wu Scholarships, designed to provide recipients with funds to help with any aspect of doctoral study, from research expenses to personal living expenses. Established by Daisy Yen Wu in memory of Hsien Wu, these scholarships recognize students for their academic ability, performance, character, and financial need.

[Read the full story](#)

## Two Doctoral Candidates Named Borlaug Scholars



Jenna Hershberger and Ella Taagen, doctoral candidates in plant breeding, are among 10 students nationwide who've been selected as National Association of Plant Breeders Borlaug Scholars. The Borlaug Scholars program aims to enhance the plant breeding profession by providing each scholar with funding to attend the annual NAPB meeting and pairing them with NAPB member-mentors.

[Read the full story](#)

## In-person or Online, Cornell's Summer Research Internships Prove Successful



The COVID-19 pandemic halted plans to host annual on-campus summer research experiences for undergraduates from institutions across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Cornell faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate student mentors, however, quickly pulled together to shift course and move these programs online, allowing about 90 undergraduates to experience virtual research at Cornell.

[Read the full story](#)

## Attendance Soars for 2020 Online Transitions Workshops



Record numbers of students attended this August's online Transitions workshops. Unlike years past where physical space limited attendance, Cornell's move to remote professional development allowed greater numbers of participants to learn about graduate student life at Cornell. The series saw an overall attendance increase of 259% after going remote in 2020.

[Read the full story](#)

## Graduate Student Spotlights

**John McMullen** | *Entomology*



Entomology doctoral candidate John McMullen uses the common fruit fly's gut microbiome as a model for studying microbial contributions to obesity and metabolic syndromes in humans. As a 2020 inductee into the Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, McMullen aims to create more inclusive spaces in academia for students of all backgrounds and identities.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Johana Uribe** | *Biomedical Engineering*



Johana Uribe, a doctoral candidate in biomedical engineering, investigates the interactions between cancer extracellular vesicles and adipose derived cells. Understanding these interactions will allow the development of treatments and therapeutics to stop metastasis. A 2020 inductee into the Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, Uribe strives to help others access opportunities.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Drea Darby** | *Entomology*



Entomology doctoral student Drea Darby studies host-microbe-environment interactions with a focus on the impact of nutrition on infection dynamics in the fruit fly. Through this research, she aims to understand the mechanisms by which high sugar diets lead to increased susceptibility to bacterial infection, particularly in patients with hyperglycemia or type two diabetes.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Lara Fresko Madra** | *History of Art, Archaeology, and Visual Studies*



Lara Fresko Madra, a doctoral candidate in history of art, archaeology, and visual studies, researches violent pasts and their reverberations in contemporary art practices from Turkey with a focus on the works of seven artists. As one of 23 Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship recipients for 2020-21, Fresko Madra will use the next year to focus solely on writing her dissertation.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## Emily Donald | *History*



History doctoral student Emily Donald uses the concentrations of modern southeast Asian history; feminist, gender, and sexuality studies; and queer history to examine what love and desire between women and gender-nonconforming people has meant historically in Thailand. Even though her planned research travel was interrupted by the pandemic, Donald has continued to make degree progress.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

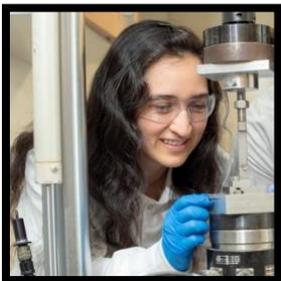
## Manisha Munasinghe | *Computational Biology*



Manisha Munasinghe, a doctoral candidate in computational biology, researches the genetic, behavioral, and environmental factors that contribute to speciation by integrating theory and computer simulations with datasets to model genetic processes. By better understanding genetics, scientists will be better able to improve crop and animal species.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## Macy Castaneda | *Mechanical Engineering*



Mechanical engineering doctoral student Macy Castaneda's research analyzes the determinants of bone strength with the ultimate goal of preventing and treating fractures or disabilities. As a 2020 Ford Fellow, Castaneda has joined a community of scholars dedicated to supporting one another, promoting diversity and inclusivity in higher education, and diversifying the professoriate.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## Eugene Law | *Soil and Crop Sciences*



Eugene Law, a doctoral candidate in soil and crop sciences, is interested in sustainability of agriculture and food systems. His research focuses on perennial grain cropping systems in New York, which produce staple foods without the negative side effects of annual crops. As a 2020 Bouchet Scholar, he is learning from and collaborating with a network of scholars to make higher education more inclusive.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## Victoria Ortega | *Biomedical and Biological Sciences*



Biomedical and biological sciences doctoral student Victoria Ortega researches the Nipah virus infection mechanism with a focus on the surface proteins involved in viral entry and the attachment and fusion glycoproteins. By understanding this interaction, she aims to provide a potential vaccine or drug development target to inhibit viral entry into host cells.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## Additional Graduate Students of Note

Student, Field	Achievement/Story Feature
<b>Macy Castaneda</b> , mechanical engineering, <b>Drea Darby</b> , entomology, and <b>Victoria Ortega</b> , biomedical and biological sciences	Doctoral students Macy Castaneda and Drea Darby were selected for 2020 Ford Foundation Predoctoral Competition Fellowships and doctoral candidate Victoria Ortega was selected for a 2020 Ford Foundation Dissertation Competition Fellowship. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Kwelina Thompson</b> , history	Doctoral student Kwelina Thompson contributed to a study finding that Seattle ride-share drivers' earnings are on par with the city average. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Jingqiu Liao</b> , microbiology	Doctoral candidate Jingqiu Liao contributed to a study on a Listeria protein that will offer

	a more precise way to edit RNA. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Marty Cain</b> , English language and literature	Doctoral candidate Marty Cain was one of three recipients of the Digital Consulting and Production Services grant selected by the Visual Resources Advisory Group at Cornell. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Emily Donald</b> , history, and <b>Jason Chang</b> , biomedical engineering	Doctoral students Emily Donald and Jason Chang reflect on the flexibility that allowed for continued degree progress during the pandemic. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Sarah Meiners</b> , history	History doctoral student Sara Meiners was able to take language instruction from another institution through Cornell's Southeast Asia Program, which recently received a Luce Foundation award. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Erin Isbilen</b> , psychology	Psychology graduate student Erin Isbilen is an author of a study that finds hidden emotions in the sound of words. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Yanyi Liu</b> , computer science	Computer science doctoral student Yanyi Liu contributed to a paper on cryptography that has potential implications for internet security. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Megan Barrington</b> , geological sciences, and <b>Christian Tate</b> , astronomy and space sciences	Doctoral students Megan Barrington and Christian Tate helped calibrate Mastcam-Z's stereoscopic and multispectral camera for the Perseverance rover. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Peter Cha</b> , physics	Doctoral student Peter Cha is lead author of a study modeling the chaotic behavior of 'strange' metals. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Berit Goodge</b> , applied physics	Doctoral student Berit Goodge is co-author of a new paper exploring the atomic structure of human enamel, which could help scientists prevent or reverse tooth decay. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Xueyu Tian</b> , chemical engineering	Doctoral student Xueyu Tian is first author of a paper comparing energy and environmental impacts of modern solar cells made of silicon and perovskites. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Youry Aglyamov</b> , M.S. '20, astronomy and space sciences	Doctoral candidate Youry Aglyamov is a co-author of a study examining lightning on Jupiter. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>

<p><b>Emily Tseng</b>, M.S. '19, and <b>Anthony Poon</b>, information science</p>	<p>Doctoral students Emily Tseng and Anthony Poon are co-authors of a study finding that the pandemic increased risks to New York City home health workers. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Diana Obregon</b>, entomology</p>	<p>Entomology doctoral student discusses how she used drones to conduct research on the connection between the Colombian landscape, pesticide residues, and bees. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Austin Lord</b>, anthropology</p>	<p>Anthropology doctoral candidate Austin Lord discussed the decline of cheesemaking in Nepal and the factors that might lead to its future growth. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Elizabeth Centeno-Tablante</b> and <b>Pratiwi Ridwan</b>, nutrition</p>	<p>Doctoral students Elizabeth Centeno-Tablante and Pratiwi Ridwan are part of the Cornell researcher team who reviewed scientific articles related to COVID-19 and breastfeeding, the findings from which will inform the WHO's international guidelines. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Ashudeep Singh</b>, computer science</p>	<p>Computer science doctoral student Ashudeep Singh is co-first author of a paper on a tool developed by Cornell researchers to improve the fairness of online rankings. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Oliver Ngai Keung Chan</b>, communication, <b>Yingjie (Tom) Fei</b>, Ph.D. '20, operations research and information engineering, <b>Wanheng Hu</b>, science and technology studies, <b>Yingyu Liu</b>, plant pathology, <b>Yingying Zhang</b>, biophysics, <b>Yaoyi Zhou</b>, design and environmental analysis, and <b>Li (Julia) Zhu</b>, policy analysis and management</p>	<p>Doctoral students Oliver Ngai Keung Chan, Yingjie (Tom Fei), Wanheng Hu, Yinyu Liu, Yingying Zhang, Yaohi Zhou, and Li (Julia) Zhu are recipients of the 2020 Wu Scholarships, which provide recipients with funds to help with any aspect of doctoral study. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Allie Hall</b>, food science and technology</p>	<p>Food science graduate student Allie Hall is team co-captain for the product Smoothie Bites, which recently earned the top prize at the 2020 Institute of Food Technologists' (IFT) Student Association &amp; Mars Product Development national competition. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Brian Schaefer</b> and <b>Alexander Jarjour</b>, physics</p>	<p>Doctoral student Brian Schaefer is lead author of a paper on graphene sensors that detect miniscule changes in magnetic fields,</p>

	to which doctoral student Alexander Jarjour contributed as a co-author. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Yuan Yao, Anuj Bhargava, and Zhichu Tang</b> , materials science and engineering	Doctoral students Yuan Yao, Anuj Bhargava, and Zhichu Tang are co-authors of a paper describing a way to bind and stack nanoscale clusters of copper molecules. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Jaleigh Pier</b> , geological sciences	Doctoral student Jaleigh Pier is part of a team who will be conducting a national public survey about how the pandemic might change support for conservation, as supported by a Cornell Atkinson grant. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Hailey Scofield</b> , neurobiology and behavior, and <b>Nathan Oakes</b> , computational biology	Doctoral students Hailey Scofield and Nathan Oakes competed in the 76West Clean Energy Competition with their startup, Combplex. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Michael Cao '14</b> and <b>Kyle Dorsey</b> , applied physics, and <b>Michael Reynolds</b> , physics	Doctoral students Michael Cao, Kyle Dorsey, and Michael Reynolds are co-authors of a study on microscopic robots that can be controlled with standard electronic signals. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Zhengqi Li</b> and <b>Wenqi Xian</b> , computer science	Doctoral student Zhengqi Li is first author of a paper on a method that creates maneuverable 3D images showing world landmarks' changes in appearance over time. Doctoral student Wenqi Xian contributed. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Jenna Hershberger</b> and <b>Ella Taagen</b> , plant breeding	Plant breeding doctoral candidates Jenna Hershberger and Ella Taagen are among 10 graduate students nationwide who have been selected as National Association of Plant Breeders Borlaug Scholars. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Andrew Horning</b> , applied mathematics	Applied mathematics doctoral student Andrew Horning served as a graduate student mentor during the summer research internships for undergraduates program, held remotely this summer. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Min-Ting Lee</b> , nutrition	Doctoral student Min-Ting Lee is first author of a paper explaining how milk nutrients shape infants' microbiomes. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Kasey Schalich</b> , animal science	Doctoral student Kasey Schalich started the 'Egg-Vengers', a group seeking to donate

	surplus eggs from the Cornell Poultry Farm to area food pantries weekly. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Benjamin Steeper</b> , computer science	Master's student Benjamin Steeper is a co-author of a paper on a device that tracks household appliances through vibrations and AI. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Freddie Xu</b> , genetics, genomics, and development	First-year doctoral student Freddie Xu discusses how this fall's remote Transitions sessions prepared him for starting graduate school. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Sayak Ghosh</b> , M.S. '19, physics	Doctoral student Sayak Ghosh is lead author of a paper on a new type of superconductor. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Zach Berry</b> , M.S. '20, industrial and labor relations	Doctoral student Zach Berry partnered with a professor to survey students in a CALS peer mentor program to better understand the program's impact. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Thapakorn Jaroentomeechai</b> and <b>Sandra Vadhin</b> , chemical engineering	Doctoral students Thapakorn Jaroentomeechai and Sandra Vadhin contributed to a paper on engineered bacteria's ability to produce cancer biomarkers. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Morgan Irons</b> , soil and crop sciences	Soil and crop sciences doctoral student Morgan Irons' soil microbiome experiment was launched to the International Space Station. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Anne Byrne</b> , applied economics and management	In testimony before the New York State Legislature, doctoral candidate Anne Byrne explained that food insecurity can be blamed on unemployment economics rather than coronavirus hot spots. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Dusti Bridges</b> , anthropology	Doctoral student Dusti Bridges contributed to a recently launched online collection dedicated to digitizing and repatriating artifacts from upstate Indigenous towns. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>