

# Graduate Student Highlights

October 2021 – December 2021

## Graduate School News

### Students, Alumni Discuss Anti-Asian Racism and Allyship



Anti-Asian racism has been brought to the forefront in recent months, but its history in the U.S. extends much further back. A panel of graduate students and Cornell alumni gathered on Oct. 4 for a discussion about anti-Asian racism and allyship. The session, “Understanding and Combating Insidious Forms of Anti-Asian Racism,” was part of the Building Allyship Series.

[Read the full story](#)

### Reaching Applicants Everywhere: Second Virtual Graduate School Fair a Success



Prospective applicants from across the globe experienced Cornell from the comfort of their homes during the Cornell Virtual Graduate School Fair on Oct. 8. The virtual fair brought Cornell’s graduate programs and summer research opportunities alive in an accessible online exhibit hall with live chat from faculty, staff, and graduate students across campus.

[Read the full story](#)

### Graduate School Ranked in Two 2021 Annual Top 10 Lists



The Cornell University Graduate School was recently ranked as a top 10 graduate school by two publications, making both Woman Engineer magazine and Minority Engineer magazine’s 2021 lists. Woman Engineer and Minority Engineer magazines’ top schools were selected based on their offerings of a diverse curriculum, student body, and faculty and that foster a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

[Read the full story](#)

## Doctoral Alumna Selected for Inaugural SUNY Chancellor Distinguished Ph.D. Graduate Dissertation Award



Kaylin Ratner, Ph.D. '20, has been selected as a finalist for the inaugural SUNY Chancellor Distinguished Ph.D. Graduate Dissertation Award. Created to recognize outstanding doctoral candidates in the SUNY system, the awards were granted to one first place winner, four finalists, and three honorable mentions. Ratner received her doctoral degree in human development.

[Read the full story](#)

## Graduate School Recognizes Over 80 Dean's Scholars



The Graduate School welcomed over 80 new Dean's Scholars into the community of over 300 current Dean's Scholars at Cornell. The Dean's Scholars program honors recipients of competitive diversity-focused fellowships and gives students the opportunity to establish and maintain connections across graduate fields while participating in professional and community development events.

[Read the full story](#)

## Cornell Doctoral Candidate Places Third in Ivy+ 3MT



Biochemistry, molecular and cell biology doctoral candidate Bhargav Sanketi earned third place in the Nov. 18 Ivy+ Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, in which he and food science and technology doctoral candidate Rachel Allison represented Cornell. Presented online, 16 students from eight institutions presented the most impactful parts of their dissertation research in just three minutes.

[Read the full story](#)

## Graduate School Recognizes Over 40 New NSF GRFP Recipients



Forty-four graduate students have been selected as new National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NSF GRFP) Fellows. These new fellows join Cornell's community of nearly 200 fellows currently on campus. The NSF GRFP received over 13,000 applications in 2020 and offered approximately 2,000 fellowships to research-based master's and doctoral students.

[Read the full story](#)

## Graduate School Dean Named Chair of Blue Ribbon Committee for National Academies



Kathryn J. Boor, dean of the Graduate School and vice provost for graduate education, was named chair of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Enhancing Coordination Between Land-Grant Universities and Colleges, established by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Using case studies, the committee will develop guidelines to inform collaborative projects.

[Read the full story](#)

## Any Person...Any Career...Greater Impact



Marika Nell, Ph.D. '20, and Kevin McDermott, Ph.D. '19, began their doctoral programs hoping to work in academia but discovered policy careers along the way. They discuss how Cornell resources have shaped their paths as well as how they find fulfillment in the ability to impact others more broadly and more tangibly while making use of the skills learned during their doctoral programs.

[Read the full story](#)

## Cornellians Discuss Identity, Challenges, and Allyship



A panel composed of Cornell’s international students and postdocs shared their insights into identity and offered advice on how to support the international community during a Building Allyship Series session, “The Marginalization and Racialization of International Scholar Identities within the U.S. Context,” on Nov. 18. Vice Provost for International Affairs Gustavo A. Flores-Macías opened the panel.

[Read the full story](#)

## Graduate Student Spotlights

### **Benjamin Rosche** | *Sociology*



Sociology doctoral candidate Benjamin Rosche studies the conditions that promote friendships that cross socioeconomic boundaries among school children and the implications of these friendships on long-term educational achievement and economic success of disadvantaged youth. He received a \$240,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to pursue this research.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

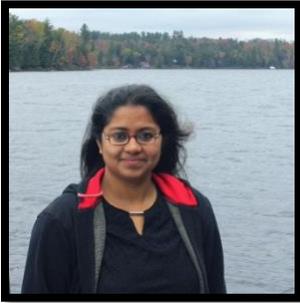
### **Samantha Bolten** | *Food Science and Technology*



Samantha Bolten, a doctoral student in food science and technology, studies factors associated with the persistence of the foodborne pathogen *Listeria monocytogenes* in post-harvest environments. Her research hopes to ensure the safety of food and public health by mitigating foodborne pathogens in food processing environments, which can contaminate food products and cause foodborne illness.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Sharifa Sultana** | *Information Science*



Information science doctoral candidate Sharifa Sultana's research looks to support sustainable development goals by the United Nations by designing culturally appropriate technologies to match social values and norms of marginalized populations in developing countries. Sultana received an honorable mention for a CHI 2021 paper and was named a Facebook Fellow.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Kunal Shastri** | *Electrical and Computer Engineering*



Kunal Shastri, a doctoral candidate in electrical and computer engineering, researches devices and performance limits in the field of optics and photonics, which will help assess current device designs while informing future designs. Shastri presented recent work at a virtual conference using Conference Grant funds from the Graduate School.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Ben Fried** | *English Language and Literature*



English language and literature doctoral candidate Ben Fried studies the networks linking writers, readers, and publishing institutions across the Anglophone world. Through his research, he reshapes the history of 20<sup>th</sup>-century writing in English by bringing understudied literatures and literary figures to the forefront. Fried was awarded a Cornell University Library Arts & Sciences Digitization Grant.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Breanna Green** | *Information Science*



Breanna Green, a doctoral student in information science, researches the ways in which U.S.-based white extremist ideologies that lead to acts of violence are developed online, primarily through social media. By understanding how these individuals develop these beliefs, methods for intervention can be established. Green is a 2021 Dean's Scholar.

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## **Hector Loyola Irizarry** | *Biomedical and Biological Sciences*



Biomedical and biological sciences doctoral candidate Hector Loyola Irizarry researches the gut microbiome to uncover the mechanisms behind microbiome-associated diseases which has the potential to inform future treatments for specific diseases. Outside of his studies, he participates in diversity and inclusion initiatives through his field and the Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## **Malcolm Bare** | *English Language and Literature*



Malcolm Bare, a doctoral candidate in English language and literature, researched how the digital humanities discipline could adjust its practices to be interoperable with those in natural language processing and machine learning. Having fulfilled all requirements for the doctoral degree, Bare successfully navigated the job market and shared his insights during a Careers Beyond Academia event.

[Graduate School spotlight](#)

## Additional Graduate Students of Note

Student, Field	Achievement/Story Feature
<b>Navika Gangrade</b> , nutrition	Doctoral candidate Navika Gangrade led a study on nutrition education's ability to improve nutrition and promote positive youth development in places with little or no access to healthy and affordable food. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Jonathan Hughes</b> , ecology and evolutionary biology	Jonathan Hughes, a doctoral candidate in ecology and evolutionary biology, is co-first author of a paper on how behavioral flexibility might have helped primates survive across the K-PG boundary. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Fernando Galvan</b> , plant pathology, <b>Marcin Sawczuk</b> , civil and environmental engineering, <b>Christian Sprague</b> , systems engineering, <b>Karan Vishwanath</b> , materials science and engineering, <b>Ludovico Cestarollo</b> , materials science and engineering, and <b>Jacquelyn Linevsky</b> , astronomy and space sciences	Cornell's student startup accelerator, eLab, announced its 2021-22 cohort, which includes graduate students Fernando Galvan, Marcin Sawczuk, Christian Sprague, Karan Cishwanath, Ludovico Cestarollo, and Jacquelyn Linevsky. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Nikita Agarwal</b> , field science and technology, and <b>Nikolai Kolba</b> , food science and technology	Doctoral students Nikita Agarwal and Nikolai Kolba contributed to a study about the nutritional potential of the red grape pulp leftover from the wine making process. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Ronald Heisser</b> , theoretical and applied mechanics, <b>Cameron Aubin</b> , mechanical engineering, and <b>Nicholas Kincaid</b> , mechanical engineering	Doctoral candidate Ronald Heisser is lead author of a paper on a new inflatable braille display for electronics, to which doctoral students Cameron Aubin and Nicholas Kincaid contributed. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Marguerite Pacheco</b> , biomedical engineering, <b>Juhwan Seo</b> , sociology, <b>Jason Chang</b> , biomedical engineering, <b>Kavya Krishnan</b> , soil and crop sciences, and <b>Vinh Pham</b> , comparative literature	Graduate students Marguerite Pacheco, Juhwan Seo, Jason Marvin, Kavya Krishnan, and Vinh Pham participated in the October 2021 Building Allyship Series session on anti-Asian racism and allyship. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>John Kallas</b> , industrial and labor relations	Doctoral student John Kallas, who leads Cornell's Labor Action Tracker, commented on the number of strikes occurring in October 2021. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>

<p><b>Margaux Mora</b>, food science and technology, <b>Glycine Jiang</b>, food science and technology, <b>Margarita Valdiviezo</b>, food science and technology, <b>Austin Montgomery</b>, food science and technology, and <b>Christian Mercado</b>, food science and technology</p>	<p>Big Red Brewing, a graduate student organization including students Margaux Mora, Glycine Jiang, Margarita Valdiviezo, Austin Montgomery, and Christian Mercado, brewed a new beer, “Gorges Libe-ation,” with all-New York ingredients. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Kyle Dayton</b>, geological sciences</p>	<p>Doctoral student Kyle Dayton, alongside a professor, joined a small team of international researchers at the newly erupted Cumbre Vieja volcano on the island of La Palma in the Canary Islands. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Brendan Quirion</b>, natural resources</p>	<p>Master’s student Brendan Quirion led a study finding that insects and diseases that are damaging and killing trees across the U.S. are reducing the ability of the nation’s forests to capture and store climate-changing carbon dioxide. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Hao Zhou</b>, microbiology</p>	<p>Doctoral student Hao Zhou is lead author on a paper on using machine learning to predict the spread of antibiotic resistance. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Stephanie Tepper</b>, M.A. ’21, psychology</p>	<p>Doctoral student Stephanie Tepper is a co-author of a paper finding that vast wealth is tolerated more for individuals than groups. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Viviana Rivera Flores</b>, food science and technology, <b>Piyush Jain</b>, mechanical engineering, <b>Brenna Flynn</b>, M.S. ’21, food science and technology, <b>Mark Emile Punzalan</b>, food science and technology, <b>Andreea Beldie</b>, food science and technology, and <b>Kalayarasan Seranthian</b>, biological and environmental engineering</p>	<p>Graduate students Viviana Rivera Flores, Piyush Jain, Brenna Flynn, Mark Emile Punzalan, Andreea Beldie, and Kalayarasan Seranthian comprise the team BigRedBites, which is among the winners of Phase 1 of the NASA Deep Space Food Challenge. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Maria Antoniak</b>, information science</p>	<p>Doctoral candidate Maria Antoniak is first author of a paper that investigates the biases coded in models and datasets used for text-mining research. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Jennifer Bustillos</b>, mechanical engineering</p>	<p>Doctoral student Jennifer Bustillos is lead author of a paper describing a counterintuitive way to improve 3D-printed metal alloys. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>

<b>Meisam Zaferani</b> , food science and technology	Doctoral candidate Meisam Zaferani is first author of a paper examining how sperm change their swimming patterns to navigate to the egg. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Emily Urban</b> , soil and crop science	Doctoral candidate Emily Urban is a researcher on a project looking for better ways for low-intensity, small stakeholders to raise chickens. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Stella Ocker</b> , astronomy and space sciences	Doctoral candidate Stella Ocker discussed her research into the interstellar medium. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Saket Bagde</b> , biochemistry, molecular and cell biology	Doctoral candidate Saket Bagde is lead author on a study capturing a never-before-recorded stage of an antibiotic-producing enzyme's construction process, opening the gateway for future pharmaceuticals. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Thomas Kiely</b> , physics	Doctoral candidate Thomas Kiely is lead author of a paper finding that the experimental model for studying the inner-workings of strange metals does not capture what is really happening inside strange metals. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Yanqiu Tao</b> , systems engineering	Doctoral student Yanqiu Tao is co-author of a study on ways to sustainably manage the influx of electric vehicle batteries. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>David Wickell</b> , plant biology	Doctoral candidate David Wickell is first author of a study uncovering information about quillwort's unique method of photosynthesis. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Benjamin Steeper</b> , computer science, <b>Adrita Dass</b> , mechanical engineering, and <b>Chenxi Tian</b> , mechanical engineering	A team of Cornell students, including Benjamin Steeper, Adrita Dass, and Chenxi Tian, won a grant from NASA's University Student Research Challenge for a proposed sensor that can help 3D printers build better, more reliable products. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Sharifa Sultana</b> , information science	Sharifa Sultana, a doctoral candidate in information science, received an award for a study finding that rural Bangladeshis with little access to internet rely on local experts, spiritual views, and their sense of social

	justice to evaluate new coronavirus information. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Bhargav Sanketi</b> , biochemistry, molecular and cell biology, and <b>Rachel Allison</b> , food science and technology	Doctoral candidate Bhargav Sanketi earned third place at the Ivy+ Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, at which he and doctoral candidate Rachel Allison represented Cornell. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Victoria Baugh</b> , English language and literature	English language and literature doctoral candidate Victoria Baugh curated a digital exhibit from a Cornell Library photo collection during her Summer Digital Humanities Fellowship program. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Joy Ming</b> , information science, and <b>Sharon Heung</b> , information science	Doctoral student Joy Ming is first author of a paper finding that researchers need to overcome response bias to create tech products people want to use, to which doctoral student Sharon Heung contributed. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Homari Aoki</b> , global development, <b>Alejandra Plaza Limon</b> , public administration, <b>Nick Hamp-Adams</b> , public administration, and <b>Joyce Kabui</b> , global development	Master's students Homari Aoki, Alejandra Plaza Limon, Nick Hamp-Adams, and Joyce Kabui virtually attended the COP26. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>David McKellar</b> , biomedical engineering	Biomedical engineering doctoral candidate David McKellar contributed to the creation of a new cell database. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Samuel Barnett</b> , microbiology	Samuel Barnett, a doctoral student in microbiology, is first author of a paper on a technique to track microbes and understand how they process soil carbon. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Hyesook Chung</b> , industrial and labor relations	Doctoral candidate Hyesook Chung is a co-author of a paper finding that companies that invested more in employee training before the pandemic were less likely to lay off their employees to cope with pandemic-related financial pressures. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Jacquelyn Cheng '15</b> , food science and technology	Doctoral student Jacquelyn Cheng is first author of a paper on a new zinc index for the human body. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Janet Chen</b> , information science	Janet Chen, an information science doctoral student, discussed research on managing digital media users' accounts after death. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>

<b>Ayaj Rana</b> , industrial and labor relations	Doctoral student Ayaj Rana is helping a research team implement a survey that seeks to find out the extent to which distance communication methods are effective for running arbitration hearings or mediations during the pandemic. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Anna Whittemore</b> , anthropology	Anthropology doctoral student Anna Whittemore is enrolled in a new Quechua language class in preparation for fieldwork in the Andes. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Janelle Morano</b> , natural resources	Janelle Morano, a doctoral student in natural resources, researches how fish move and migrate in response to climate change. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Nazih Kassem</b> , biological and environmental engineering	Nazih Kassem, a doctoral candidate in biological and environmental engineering, works to convert food and agricultural waste into energy products. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Ekaterina Landgren</b> , applied mathematics	Doctoral candidate Ekaterina Landgren is lead author of a paper on mathematical modeling that shows how friendships can affect election results. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Trevor Amestoy</b> , civil and environmental engineering, <b>David Esparza</b> , ecology and evolutionary biology, <b>Erik Bidstrup</b> , chemical engineering, and <b>Anna Whittemore</b> , anthropology	Doctoral students Trevor Amestoy, David Esparza, Erik Bidstrup, and Anna Whittemore are four of 44 graduate students who were selected as new National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program recipients in 2021. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Bryce Robinson</b> , ecology and evolutionary biology	Graduate student Bryce Robinson spoke about a new Redtail Hawk Project he is involved with at Cornell. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Ying Li</b> , food science and technology	Doctoral student Ying Li is an author of research on a blue pigmented food colorant. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Xavier Tchoujan</b> , public health	Master of public health student Xavier Tchoujan worked with Cayuga Health Partners and Reach Medical on a screening system for patients. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Jackie Linevsky</b> , astronomy and space sciences	Doctoral student Jackie Linevsky is working on a company that connects tourists with astronomical observatories, which she pitched during an eLab pitch night. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>

<p><b>Shayne Wierbowski</b>, computational biology</p>	<p>Doctoral candidate Shayne Wierbowski is first author of a paper about a computational tool that predicts where COVID-19 viral proteins bind with human proteins. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Rama Adithya Varasani</b>, information science</p>	<p>Information science doctoral candidate Rama Adithya Varasani is first author of a paper on how growing smartphone use in India is causing teachers to feel more stress and burnout. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Olivia Graham</b>, ecology and evolutionary biology, <b>Brendan Rappazzo</b>, computer science, and <b>Morgan Eisenlord</b>, ecology and evolutionary biology</p>	<p>Ecology and evolutionary biology doctoral candidate Olivia Graham is co-lead author of research on seagrass wasting disease, to which doctoral students Brendan Rappazzo and Morgan Eisenlord contributed. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Ben Mirin</b>, natural resources</p>	<p>Doctoral student Ben Mirin speaks about the impacts of songbird contests and how educational tools can address threats of the songbird trade. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Seema Singh</b>, city and regional planning, <b>Natalia Lopez Barbosa</b>, chemical engineering, <b>Janani Hariharan</b>, soil and crop sciences, <b>Motasem Kalaji</b>, communication, and <b>Nancy Ruiz-Uribe</b>, biomedical engineering</p>	<p>Doctoral students Seema Singh, Natalia Lopez Barbosa, Janani Hariharan, Motasem Kalaji, and Nancy Ruiz-Uribe participated in a panel discussion about international identity during a Building Allyship Series session in November. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Sebastian Ament</b>, computer science</p>	<p>Doctoral student Sebastian Ament is co-lead author of a paper on artificial intelligence-led autonomous materials discovery. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Sterling Williams-Ceci '21</b>, information science</p>	<p>Doctoral student Sterling Williams-Ceci conducted research into “sharenting” as an undergraduate at Cornell, which led her to pursue a doctorate at Cornell as well. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Paul Lushenko</b>, government</p>	<p>Doctoral student Paul Lushenko edited a new book about the use of drones in warfare. <a href="#">Learn more...</a></p>
<p><b>Ama Bemba Adwetewa-Badu</b>, English language and literature, <b>Claire Cororaton</b>, history, and <b>Ben Fried</b>, English language and literature</p>	<p>Doctoral students Ama Bemba Adwetewa-Badu, Claire Cororaton, and Ben Fried are contributing to projects selected for this year’s Cornell University Library annual</p>

	Grants Program for Digital Collections in Arts and Sciences. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Yanqiu Tao</b> , M.S. '20, systems engineering	Yanqiu Tao, a doctoral student in systems engineering, is first author of a paper finding that shifting meetings and conventions online reduces their carbon footprint by 94%. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Christian Mercado</b> , food science and technology	Master of food science candidate Christian Mercado speaks about his experience as a graduate student as he prepares to complete his degree. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Ethan Dickerman</b> , archaeology	Ethan Dickerman, a master's student in archaeology, completed work as part of a rural humanities seminar hosted by the Society for the Humanities. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Yihan Zhu</b> , mechanical engineering, <b>Zhiyu Wang</b> , mechanical engineering, and <b>Kyung-Rak Jang</b> , mechanical engineering	Mechanical engineering master's students Yihan Zhu, Zhiyu Wang, and Kyung-Rak Jang comprised the student team whose robot bested the corporate sponsor in a robot contest. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Stella Ocker</b> , astronomy and space sciences	Doctoral student Stella Ocker's research was featured on the "Best of last year: The top Phys.org articles of 2021" list. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Jaleigh Pier</b> , geological sciences	Doctoral student Jaleigh Pier discusses research she started as a master's student at the University of Connecticut about brachiopods and mass extinction events. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>Daniel Weinstock</b> , materials science and engineering	Materials science and engineering graduate student Daniel Weinstock is lead author of a study on a new X-ray technique that offers a view of batteries while they are in use. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>
<b>John Wright</b> , materials science and engineering	Doctoral student John Wright is a co-lead author of a paper on a crystal structure that combines a semiconductor and a superconductor. <a href="#">Learn more...</a>