



The Cornell Commitment Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2005



*The alumni newsletter of the Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars,
The Cornell Tradition, and the Cornell Presidential Research Scholars*

Cornell Commitment Convocation 2005

Randy Cohen, four time Emmy Award winner, was the featured speaker at this year's annual Cornell Commitment Convocation. Cohen's address, entitled "Everyday Ethics," was held at 7:30pm in the David L. Call Auditorium in Kennedy Hall and was followed by an open reception. A free community event, the Convocation was attended by 600 members of the Cornell, Ithaca, and surrounding communities as well as Cornell alumni.

Cohen began his career writing humor pieces for magazines and newspapers, such as *The New Yorker*, *Harpers*, and *The Atlantic*. For his writing on *Late Night with David Letterman*, Cohen won three Emmy Awards; he went on to win a fourth for his work on TV Nation. Cohen was the original head writer and theme music co-writer for *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*. Cohen is the current writer of "The Ethicist," a weekly column in the *New York Times Magazine* that ponders ethical dilemmas that families and communities continually face. He is also the ethics columnist for the *Times of London*. His books include *The Good, the Bad and the Difference*, a book based upon his newspaper columns, and *Diary of Flying Man*, a collection of his short stories.

In addition to the featured speaker, the evening event included the recognition of The Cornell Tradition Debra S. Newman '02 Community Recognition Award recipient. The award acknowledges the efforts of outstanding individuals who have gone above and beyond in their service to the greater community and

includes a \$1,000 award to an agency of the recipient's choice. This year's recipient was Mrs. Frances A. Ramin. Mrs. Ramin has served the Ithaca community for several decades, working with organizations such as Family and Children's Services of Ithaca, Friends of the Library, Longview/Ithacare, Finger Lakes Library System, and the Johnson Museum of Art. After being recognized for her work, she promptly named Family and Children's Services of Ithaca as the recipient of her \$1,000 award.

Just outside the auditorium, students from each of the three Commitment programs showcased their research, work in the community, and contributions to campus life before and after the Convocation address. Local community agencies also put displays alongside the student work in the hallways outside the auditorium. The Cornell Commitment held a raffle to benefit the Aceh Relief Fund, an Ithaca-based fund that provides emergency relief to tsunami victims in Aceh, Indonesia. The raffle ultimately yielded several hundred dollars, which was given directly to the relief fund. For more information about the Aceh Relief Fund, please visit <http://www.tsunamirelief.cornell.edu/localfunds.html>.

The annual Convocation is sponsored by the Cornell Commitment. Initiated in 1996 by The Cornell Tradition, Convocation is held to honor the achievements of our students while concurrently providing a service to our community and alumni.



INSIDE THE ALUMNI NEWS...

Alumni News
and Activities
PAGE 2

Commitment
News
PAGE 3

The Meinig Family
Cornell National
Scholars
PAGE 4

The Cornell
Tradition
PAGE 5

Cornell Tradition:
Alumni Spotlight
PAGE 6

The Cornell
Presidential Research
Scholars
PAGE 7

The Cornell
Presidential Research
Scholars: Alumni
Spotlight
PAGE 8

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Spotlight on Alumni Activities

Tips on Staying In Touch and Staying Informed

- ★ Remember to update your contact information with Cornell University Alumni Affairs so you can continue to receive newsletters and special announcements from the Cornell Commitment as well as news and information about other events and campus happenings. Contact Alumni Affairs at (607) 255-2390.
- ★ The Alumni E-Newsletter Quarterly: The **Cornell Commitment Alumni E-Newsletter will be arriving in your inbox on a quarterly basis**, so expect a Cornell Commitment update each season! If you would like to include information about an activity or recent alumni accomplishment in our next newsletter, please contact Kirsten Gabriel at kkg6@cornell.edu. We encourage you to make this YOUR alumni newsletter!
- ★ The **New Cornell Commitment Alumni Website** is now up and running! You can view the website by clicking on the "Alumni" link off the Cornell Commitment homepage at www.cornell.commitment.edu.
- ★ **Want to know what's going on in your area?** Explore the Alumni Affairs Regional Offices Alumni Events online search engine to learn about events for Cornellians happening in your area. Cornell Clubs exist in 40 of the 50 states as well as Ontario and Puerto Rico. Visit the Alumni Affairs events calendar at <http://adserv5.aad.cornell.edu/world/cal/external/default.cfm> to learn more.
- ★ **Become involved in CAAAN!** CAAAN is the Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network, a group of over 6,000 alumni volunteers who assist Cornell Admissions in recruiting superior undergraduate applicants. CAAAN members are involved in a variety of activities, the biggest of which is contacting accepted students to answer questions, provide a positive perspective on the University, and accumulate additional student information. Get in touch with CAAAN today to get involved in recruiting the class of 2010! Visit <http://caaan.admissions.cornell.edu> for more information.

Reunion 2005

There are few alumni experiences more special than a Cornell Reunion. In any given year, thousands of Cornellians return to The Hill with their significant others, families, and friends to celebrate and reminisce about their times on campus and the impact Cornell has had on their lives. This year, Reunion Weekend spans June 9-12 and will be filled with tours, college and departmental breakfasts, outdoor events, art exhibitions, campus-wide activities, and much more. A detailed events calendar can be found at the Reunion website (see below) or by calling the Alumni House at 607-255-2390. Be sure to stop by the Cornell Commitment table in Barton Hall on Friday or Saturday between 11am and 2pm to talk with current students as well as Commitment staff and other alumni. For more information about Reunion 2005, visit the event website at www.reunion.cornell.edu.

Become a Cornell Career Mentor!

Remember the harrowing process of finding your first job out of Cornell or graduate school? The anxiety, pressure, and fear of falling short of expectations are just as real today as they were when you graduated. If you would like to provide insight, advice, and good information to our students, we encourage you to register with Cornell Career Services Career Contact Network. The Network is comprised of alumni, employers, parents, students, and friends representing diverse career fields nationwide who offer to share their career experience with students and alumni. Network members help students explore career options and give insight into some of the realities of the workplace. Mentors are not expected to offer internships or jobs—just information and advice. For more information about the Career Contact Network, contact Cornell Career Services at 607-255-5221 or check out the Network website at <http://www.career.cornell.edu/alumni/shareExperiences.html>. Whether you're an experienced professional with a wealth of information, or a relatively recent graduate with great tips on applying to graduate and professional school or making a transition into the workplace, you'll find that assisting young Cornellians is a rewarding experience.

****For information about the Cornell Tradition and MFCNS Alumni Recruitment Initiatives, check out pages 4 and 5 respectively.****

What's New at the Cornell Commitment



The CPRS Student Advisory Board '05-'06

The Cornell Commitment recognizes, rewards, and encourages further development of a select group of students who exemplify Cornell's commitment to academic excellence, service, research and discovery, and leadership and learning at Cornell and beyond.



The Tradition Student Advisory Committee '05-'06

The New Commitment Class of '09

It's that time of year again, and the Cornell Commitment Office held its annual New Student Information Session to welcome accepted Commitment Students from the Class of '09. The information session for accepted students was held on Saturday, April 16, 2005. Accepted Students were joined by representatives from each of the three programs, current Commitment students, and staff from the Carol Tatkon Center to discuss freshman life at Cornell as well as the details, benefits, and requirements of the three Commitment programs. Information about all three of the programs was presented before students and their families broke off into smaller groups to discuss the individual programs with current Commitment staff and students.

CCLEAD 2004-2005

For National Scholars and Cornell Tradition freshmen and sophomores, spring semester has historically marked the start of the Cornell Commitment's leadership development program, CCLEAD. This year, however, the program has been expanded to include Cornell Presidential Research Scholars, making it a full-fledged Cornell Commitment program. The Cornell Commitment LEAD program is a series of workshops designed to help Tradition Fellows, National Scholars, and Research Scholars develop leadership and team building skills, understand themselves as leaders, and learn effective techniques that will facilitate their assumption of leadership roles at Cornell and beyond. Student selected for the program participate in workshops on personality type, leadership styles, ethical decision making, and presentation skills. Their capstone project involves collaborating with one another to design and implement a leadership workshop for high school students at an area high school. One CCLEAD student described the program this way: "CCLEAD was an amazing experience I'll never forget. It allowed me to create meaningful friendships with other Commitment students, learn about leadership, and teach others about leadership. Thanks for the great experience!"

Summer Internships

Whether it is an opportunity for summer research, working with inner city community development programs, or experiencing life on Capital Hill first-hand, students of the Cornell Commitment will be spending their summers doing amazing things. Each student in the Commitment has the opportunity to engage in one non-profit or career-related summer experience during their college career without increasing their total college indebtedness. The Cornell Commitment provides up to \$3,000 to help cover summer living expenses and provides support before, during, and after their internship or research.

The Expected Summer Replacement (ESR) Program is another funding option for students whereby the Cornell Commitment covers the student contribution portion of each intern's tuition for the following year so students can worry less about saving money to put toward their tuition and focus more of their time and energies on their internship and the communities with which he or she works. These internship opportunities are possible, in part, due to the generous, long-standing support of our alumni. Many thanks to those of you who continue to contribute to the lives of our students through support of life-changing internship programs! For more information about the Cornell Commitment internship programs or to advertise an internship with your organization through the Cornell Commitment Office, please visit each of the program's individual websites through the Cornell Commitment website at www.commitment.cornell.edu or email Kirsten Gabriel at kkg6@cornell.edu.

Changing of the Guard: New Student Advisory Groups

Congratulations to the Cornell Commitment students selected to lead their fellow students into the new academic year! The new advisory groups for the Cornell Presidential Research Scholars (CPRS) and The Cornell Tradition are pictured above. The Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars (MFCNS) have just completed the process of interviewing and selecting representatives for their Executive Board, and more information about the group can be found on page 4. The new advisory groups will be coordinating activities their own constituencies as well as collaborating with other Commitment students on Commitment-wide events like Convocation and through programs like CCLEAD.



The Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars



MFCNS Annual Alumni Reception

The annual Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars Alumni Reception in New York City is just a few short months away! From

6-9pm on June 16, 2005, MFCNS alumni, current students, and incoming students and their families will come together at the New York City Cornell Club to enjoy good food, good company, and a great speaker.

This year's speaker will be John Dyson, a 1965 graduate of Cornell University and MFCNS alumnus. Mr. Dyson has extensive leadership experience with the United States military, was a part of the New York City Rudolph Guiliani administration, and has served as Deputy Mayor of New York City. As Susan

Murphy (who will be attending this year's event) has pointed out, "the alumni reception is a great introduction and reminder of the lifetime relationships that are created at Cornell". If you have any questions about the event, please contact Kirsten Gabriel at kkg6@cornell.edu. We encourage you to attend and look forward to seeing you there!



Freshman Forum

One of the core programs within the Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars is the Freshman Forum. First year program participants come together approximately every month to explore different leadership styles, discuss leadership in practice, and simply spend time with each other. Each spring, students gather in teams to examine a particular campus issue and present the results of their findings to the University administration. 2005 marks the 5th Anniversary of Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds, Cornell University's policy on diversity. In an effort to examine the current student climate for diversity at this five-year mark, this year's freshmen are engaging their peers in conversations surrounding campus diversity and discovering the level of comfort students feel in attending Cornell. Freshman Forum students divided into teams to investigate a particular classification (such as religion, race, gender, political orientation, sexual orientation, or culture) by interviewing, surveying, and gathering experiences and opinions of students who fit their particular classification. Their project capstone consisted of formal group presentations to top university administrators, which may contribute to the shaping of future university policies and actions with regard to diversity. Following their presentation on April 20th, 2005, students were asked to speak to the University Diversity Council regarding their findings and experiences.

Join the Leadership Essay Alumni Review Committee!

One of the primary means of assisting National Scholars in reflecting on their leadership experiences in the annual Leadership Essay. The essay is an annual program requirement that allows students to demonstrate their commitment to the ideals of the MFCNS program. Each year, a committee of alumni reviews the essay submissions and selects the Excellence in Leadership Essay award winners and honorable mentions from each class. Returning students winners of the Excellence in Leadership Awards are announced in the fall at the first Scholars Symposium, while the senior Excellence in Leadership award winner is announced at the Graduation Ceremony on Friday, May 27th. Contact Heather Slowik '97, MBA '02 at hls@cornell.edu if you are interested in serving on the next year's essay review committee.

MFCNS

Recruitment Initiative

Join Meinig Family Cornell National Scholar alumni throughout the country in recruiting prospective students to attend Cornell. As a Meinig Family Cornell National Scholar alum, you can share your unique perspectives and experiences with the students who have been offered an MFCNS scholarship through participation in accepted student receptions and personal contacts with accepted students.

These personal interactions during the decision period have yielded real results and enhanced the likelihood that exceptional students will choose Cornell. To participate, contact Jama Gibbs Jackson '88 at JamaGibbsJackson@aol.com or Bill Kingston '59 at Wkingston1@aol.com. Student contacts and receptions take place in April, but get in touch now to join the team in planning for next year.

Student Leadership Team Established for 2005-2006

The interviews, discussions, and selection processes have drawn to a close and the MFCNS Executive Board for 2005-2006 has been decided! Eric Wilson '06 and Christopher Dieck '06 will spearhead the Board's efforts in the capacities of President and Vice President respectively. Jessica Bender '06 will serve as the Secretary, Michael Devitt '06 as the Executive Mentoring Coordinator, and Jessica Ingerick '06 as the Presidential Liaison. Chairships for the coming year will be as follows: Cara Santillo '06, Social Chair; Eric Zarate '07, Service Chair; and Drew Coyne '08, Leadership Chair. Thanks to all who applied for positions on the Board and committees! One of the issues the Board will face this coming year is continuing existing dialogue on the option of opening membership up to sophomores and juniors and implementing the final decision. Open membership would allow other student leaders to apply to be a part of the program and ensure comparability between the three Commitment programs (as the other two Commitment programs have successful open membership policies in place.)

Employer Recognition Luncheon

Each April as part of National Student Employment Week, The Cornell Commitment sponsors a luncheon



THE CORNELL TRADITION



*Employer Recognition Award Winners
2004-2005*

The Graduation Barbecue



One of the most beloved and memorable Tradition events in the minds of many Cornell Tradition Fellows is the Graduation Barbecue. Held each May on the Friday following Commencement, the Barbecue honors graduating seniors and their families. The Barbecue is also the venue for announcing and presenting the Senior Recognition Awards and the Jennifer Herskowitz Point of Light Award. The Senior Recognition Awards are given each year to a select group of 10-12 fellows who have gone above and beyond Tradition requirements and have been exemplary fellows throughout their time at Cornell. The Jennifer Herskowitz Point of Light award will honor either a senior who has gone above and beyond in service to The Cornell Tradition or a Tradition alum who has carried the Tradition spirit to make a difference beyond Cornell and beyond graduation.

for Cornell Tradition Fellows and their employers. This year, the Commitment was joined by the Public Service Center and the Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment to provide all Cornell student employees the opportunity to thank their supervisors and employers for their support and guidance over the past year. The luncheon took place from 11:45am - 1:15pm in the Memorial Room of Willard Straight Hall. The award presentation that followed recognized five outstanding employers as well as five outstanding student workers. Approximately 240 students, faculty and staff attended.

More than 100 Alumni Volunteer for New Cornell Tradition Recruitment Initiative

When Paige Shipman (Arts and Sciences '94) sent an email to Cornell Tradition alumni in March seeking volunteers for the first Cornell Tradition Alumni Recruitment initiative, she was overwhelmed -- but not entirely surprised -- by the response. Within two days more than 100 alumni from around the world enthusiastically offered to contact prospective students and describe their experience as Cornell Tradition Fellows. "I was delighted to see that Cornell Tradition alumni maintain their generous spirit after they graduate," said Shipman. "The excitement created by the initiative has been wonderful. I received several emails that simply said, "Bring it on!" Volunteers are responsible for personally contacting 2 to 3 students, describing The Cornell Tradition, and answering questions. Alumni are equipped with a "script," Cornell Tradition FAQs and other materials to guide them in their conversations. The Cornell Tradition Recruitment Initiative was modeled after a similar program organized by Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars alumni. Being a Cornell Tradition Fellow is both a unique experience and an honor. It adds an important and much-needed dimension to Cornell by

The Cornell Tradition supports lifestyles that integrate a strong work ethic, public service, and academic achievement by rewarding students who exemplify these characteristics with recognition and financial assistance for their education. The program encourages Tradition Fellows to unify around these common commitments and to serve as models to their communities. The Tradition also supports the development of fellows into well-rounded, productive members of society who, as alumni, will continue to support the program, both financially and through active involvement with those fellows who follow in their footsteps.

- The Cornell Tradition Mission Statement

(Continued from left)

officially recognizing the value of volunteerism and work and easing the financial burden of students who might otherwise not be able to attend. Alumni are some of the best messengers to describe how The Cornell Tradition helps students pursue their academic, professional, and personal goals.

The Cornell Tradition Recruitment Initiative is currently under way for 2005. If you would like to get involved in the future, please contact Paige Shipman at aps1@cornell.edu. You can also get involved with Cornell's Admissions Alumni Ambassador Network (CAAAN). Find the alumni group in your area and additional information about the network at www.caaan.admissions.cornell.edu.

Spring 2005 Alumni Spotlight: Gretchen Poulos '03

Gretchen Poulos '03 is a prime example of our many alumni who carry the values of The Cornell Tradition beyond graduation and affect positive change in their workplaces, communities, families, and the world. One of the ways Gretchen has contributed to the Cornell and higher education communities has been through her work with anti-hazing activities. The following interview is just a snapshot of the work and service she has done.

While at Cornell and following your graduation, you've been very active in anti-hazing activities. What sparked the interest?

I got into Dr. Shelly Campo's persuasion course. One of my favorite professors, it was obvious she cared for her students as individual human beings - not just as students - and that caring parlayed into each of her class' main objectives which was assisting the community with what we learned in class. She came to me privately before the class and told me Susan Murphy, Vice President of Student and Academic Services, was looking for some help on "the hazing issue" at Cornell. I love working on controversial things because it means you're hitting some hot button of society and really have a chance to do something significant. Working on the class project, my classmates and I learned more and more about hazing, and grew increasingly concerned about what was happening. After the class was over and we presented our results to the class and the administration, there was no way I could leave things as they were. Our initial study had revealed a serious problem that needed addressing at Cornell, and I felt like I could help. I asked Dr. Campo to be my research adviser, decided the topic of hazing would be my thesis project, and started the research.

What are some of the hazing issues facing Cornell and campuses around the country?

Cornell and other campuses across the country face a number of hazing issues. Many administrations or campus communities won't touch this topic, or when they do, it's with a 2K foot pole. People are very scared of changing the status quo. There's this theory I really like called the neo-institutional theory, which basically says that every society is perfectly ordered to create the results it generates. In other words, we have hazing because there is something, every day, that each of us does or doesn't do, or thinks or doesn't think, that causes hazing to occur. I think getting people to realize that they're all involved in the problem as well as the solution is the biggest issue underpinning hazing issues across the country.

Specific to Cornell, I think the fact that 1 in 3 students are hazed is a huge issue. Another one is that most people engaged in hazing don't recognize their activities as hazing; if you don't recognize that you have a problem, you really can't make a change. Still another is the fact that the people who are engaged in hazing are also the ones who tend to get

out and volunteer in the community the most. Unfortunately, there's no either/or. That said, a need for a more comprehensive understanding of what it is to be a college student and a good person with integrity exists.

What progress has been made since you started working with hazing?

A lot of progress has been made since I started working with hazing. It must be said that I kind of piggybacked on a lot of the administration's momentum, so I honestly don't know how it would have been had I not gotten involved. That said, we've all gotten a lot done. First off, we got a major study done - the third major study ever done in the country on hazing, and the first comprehensive study on hazing. We're all very proud of that. Second, we've educated ourselves in a pretty significant way and in turn, designed an anti-hazing program that specifically addresses issues at Cornell. And we've started to implement them all in about 2-3 years. So the University - especially Susan Murphy, Suzy Nelson, and Kent Hubbell in the administration - has been incredibly responsive and helpful at putting these efforts forward.

You were recently involved in a study of hazing at Cornell that was published in the American Journal of Health and Behavior. What did you find?

We found out quite a bit through the study we did at Cornell. The first major finding was that an extremely high number of students engage in hazing every year at Cornell. Chances are, if you are a member of the Cornell community, you know someone who's been hazed, who will be hazed, or who has or will haze someone else. We found that the single most effective factor at getting a person out of a hazing situation was having a friend outside of the hazing organization who would support them. Friends are so important, and that's why a big theme underpinning all of the Cornell anti-hazing initiatives is getting the community involved and thinking it can help.

What, in your efforts to fight hazing and educate students, has been most rewarding for you?

I think the biggest thing for me has been having the opportunity to bear witness to people being generous in making significant, difficult changes in campus policies, in the way they interact with others and in themselves in the effort to change the hazing situation at Cornell. Hazing has been around since Plato's time and we're just getting to it now... and Cornell is leading the way. That's pretty exciting and pretty rewarding!

For more information about Cornell's hazing resources and prevention activities, visit www.hazing.cornell.edu.



HAZING:
Hazing is defined as an act that, as an explicit or implicit condition for initiation to, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership in a group or organization, could be

"I think the biggest thing for me has been having the opportunity to bear witness to people being generous in making significant, difficult changes in campus policies, in the way they interact with others and in themselves in the effort to change the hazing situation at Cornell."

seen by a reasonable person as endangering the physical health of an individual or as causing mental distress to an individual through, for example, humiliating, intimidating, or demeaning treatment; destroys or removes public or private property; involves the consumption of alcohol, other drugs, or other substances; or violates any of the policies of the University.

~ The Cornell
University Campus
Code of Conduct,
June 2004.

The Cornell Presidential Research Scholars

Research in Progress and Spring Coffee Night: A Sampling of CPRS Research from 2004-2005

Over the course of the academic year, Cornell Presidential Research Scholars have several opportunities to present their research and learn about the activities of their fellow research scholars. During the fall semester, the Research in Progress Forum serves as the primary venue during which students are able to present their research. The most recent Research in Progress forum was held on Monday, October 4, 2004 in the Carol Tatkon Center and was attended by approximately seventy-five students. Sarah LaVallee '06, Hanna Muenke '06, and Emily Briedbart '06 gave a presentation on their research on the relationship between effortful control, cortisol levels, and brain activity in preschoolers. Amy "Rowan" Kaplan '06 is currently doing research on paleography, or the study of handwriting. Her most recent focus has been on Gabriel Harvey's Letter-Book, a text from the English Renaissance period. Beki Cohen '05 gave a presentation on both her work with maple leaf toxicity in horses and her summer research on the behavior of zebras at the Massachusetts Zoo. Lastly, Lindsay Reul '07 presented her archeological research with Professor

Spotlight on Research: Rowan Kaplan

As an English and Latin major, Rowan Kaplan '06 is used to transitioning from one language to another. Her research efforts involve a slightly different form of "translating", with the purpose of transcribing old, almost indecipherable hand-written texts into typed documents. The subjects of both her current projects are located within several hours of each other in the libraries of England; with this in mind, she spent part of her winter break traveling to the British and Bodleian libraries to see the original documents first hand. After working with photocopies and microfilm, working with the original documents was a bit of a dream (and a highly productive visit). In describing one of her projects, Rowan said "I was able to edit over 44 pages that I had transcribed and also transcribed a few pages in person that were of such poor quality that it would have been impossible to do with a Xerox copy." In addition to working with these documents, Rowan also acknowledges that working with exclusive libraries and working to obtain admittance were very helpful in preparing for her future work. Ultimately, Rowan hopes to translate, edit, and publish her own version of Gabriel Harvey's *Letter Book*.

2005 Freshman Colloquium

Since the fall of 1999, the CPRS Freshman Colloquium has provided first-year students with an introduction to the program, a mechanism for transition from high school to college, and an opportunity to learn from faculty and current students about the research that is happening throughout campus. Weekly sessions are held throughout the fall semester and focus on topics such as getting started with CPRS, research ethics, and research in progress. In addition, individual colleges hold their own freshman colloquium sessions several times over the semester; topics for these sessions are determined by each college. An essential part of the CPRS program, the Freshman Colloquium helps freshman adjust to college life and realistically prepare for the research they'll engage in during the remainder of their tenure at Cornell.

Kathryn Gleason on Herod the Great's palace and burial grounds in Caesarea Maritima, Israel.

In the spring, Research Scholars gather at a slightly more informal Coffee Night, where students present their research, listen to local musical talent, and enjoy coffee and desserts. This semester's Coffee Night was held on the evening of Tuesday, March 29, 2005 in the North Campus Townhouse Community Center, and featured the research of Ethan Hawkes '07 and Jessica Yorzinski '05. Ethan is a student at the Cornell Hotel School and is studying Carnival Cruise Line CRM systems (the data Carnival collects on passengers). Recently, he developed a project researching motivational factors related to different types of alternative tourism. Jessica has been studying the visual and tactile communication of mandrills (old world monkeys) for the past year and a half. Beginning her study at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse, NY, she learned to identify specific mandrill signals. After this study, Jessica traveled to the Buffalo Zoological Garden and the Staten Island Zoo to observe groups of mandrills in action. The cumulative results of these studies have allowed Jessica to begin to determine patterns of communications between mandrills. Floris Van Breugel '08 and Aaron Gingrande '08 showcased their talents on the guitar and provided the musical entertainment for the evening. Jessica and Beki, the two seniors who presented during the research events this year, will also be presenting their research at the Senior Poster Session on April 15th, the final CPRS research event of the academic year.



Matt Ginsberg '07 speaking to students at the CPRS Coffee Night

A New CPRS Website!

After many months of hard work, the new CPRS is just about ready to be unveiled. The website redesign effort has been spearheaded by Alec Berntson, a CPRS sophomore majoring in computer science. The new CPRS website features spotlights on the latest student research, links to recent student publications, and pictures and stories from projects our students and alumni are engaging in around the world. While reflecting on his work on the website, Alec "had a really great time re-designing the CPRS website. It gave me the opportunity to get an in-depth look at what my fellows CPRSers are doing." Thanks to Alec for the many hours he spent making the site current, easy to navigate, and user-friendly. The new website should be up and running in the next several weeks, so be sure to check it out at: www.commitment.cornell.edu/CPRS

Spring 2005 Alumni Spotlight: Olubukola "Bukky" Gbadegesin

The countless perks of being a Presidential Research Scholar don't end upon graduation. Olubukola Gbadegesin, or Bukky, is a prime example of this. Bukky, who graduated in December of 2003, majored in Art History and took full advantage of her title as a Research Scholar. Originally born in Ile-Ife, Osun State in Nigeria, Bukky moved to the United States when she was about nine years old, but spent most of her life growing up in Maryland, just east of Washington, D.C. "Because it usually takes me some time to adjust to new environments, I found Ithaca very intimidating and strange at first. After a year or so, I enjoyed having an entire town within walking distance of campus. It is a beautiful and very serene environment, and I still miss it very much. I find myself coming back to visit more often than I thought I would – three times since I graduated," Bukky says, reminiscing about her days as a Cornellian. Bukky's research as a Presidential Research Scholar explored the development of modernism and post-modernism in the arts of Nigeria.

What research did you get involved in as a Presidential Research Scholar? Did you stay with one project all four years? Who were your mentors?

I entered Cornell as a Plant Science major in the Agriculture School. I was interested in doing genetic research with tomato plants and had previous experience through a high school internship at USDA. My mentor at the time was Dr. Steven Tanksley. I later decided to pursue a different area. I transferred to Arts and Sciences in my second sophomore semester and switched my major to Art History. My project and mentor changed, and I began working on Contemporary African Art with Dr. Salah Hassan.

Why did you choose the research group that you worked in? Did you know you wanted to work with them right away? What was the environment like?

I chose my first mentor, Dr. Tanksley, after interviewing with a few other professors. His lab was doing a wide range of research, and I felt that I would learn a great deal in that environment. And, despite later switching majors, I did find the experience very beneficial. As an Art History major, there were also several areas that I could have pursued. Dr. Hassan's knowledge and passion for his area definitely influenced and inspired me to do research in African art.

Describe the quality of your mentorship. Were you mostly independently working or under the guidance of others?

Because my mentor was involved in many projects on and off-campus, I found myself working independently for most of my time as an Art History major. The major and my project required reading, library research and generally, individual work. When I did meet with my mentor, it was to review my progress, clarify readings, and review the direction of my project.

What did you do after graduating? What are you currently doing and where? What are your future plans?

After graduating, I worked as a tutor for a few months, while I was waiting for responses from graduate programs. I am currently in the PhD program for Art History at Emory University, completing my second year in a 6-8 year program.

How has your research experience influenced your current and future work? Did you enjoy your research experience overall?

My research experience taught me not to limit my options. Although I was certain that I wanted to be a part of the program and recognized what a wonderful opportunity it offered, I was very aware that coming from high school, there were a number of interesting majors and fields that I wasn't aware of. My experience in CPRS was so great because the program did not discourage me from changing majors and pursuing new ideas. And now I am certain that I am on the path and in the field that I was meant to be in.

What advice would you give to students?

To students, I'll say this: one of the most absurdly difficult things about college is having to choose at such a young age what you will be doing for the rest of your life. Take this time to focus your energy and really explore your options. Don't be afraid to change your mind or mix-and-match. With programs like CPRS, the support is there and the limits are minimal, so take advantage of the opportunity.

Thanks, Bukky, and good luck in the future!

This article was written by Santhi Gollapalli, a CPRS student who will be graduating this spring from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) with a major in Communication and Biology in Society. This article originally appeared in the Winter 2004 edition of Focus, the CPRS semi-annual magazine.

"My research experience taught me not to limit my options. Although I was certain that I wanted to be a part of the program and recognized what a wonderful opportunity it offered, I was very aware that coming from high school, there were a number of interesting majors and fields that I wasn't aware of. My experience in CPRS was so great because the program did not discourage me from changing majors and pursuing new ideas. And now I am certain that I am on the path and in the field that I was meant to be in."