

Title: Genetic Diversity Research at Cornell

The New Life Sciences initiative has amplified the impact that Cornell makes with its genetics and genomics research. In particular, studies of genetic diversity and its conservation importance have broadened at Cornell with recent faculty hires. However, research on aspects of genetic diversity at Cornell is spread out across at least ten departments and three colleges, suggesting that its full impact may not be realized until potential synergies are explored and realized. In particular, five focal areas on campus have little integration and yet could benefit from a joint initiative:

- 1) Crop diversity, origins, and genetic improvement
- 2) Genetic diversity and health of wild species of conservation concern
- 3) The community ecological impacts of genetic diversity
- 4) Metagenomics; the genetic exploration of microbial diversity and function
- 5) Management and policy decisions in the context of conservation genetics

We invite Cornell faculty who share these interests to meet, explore common goals, and discuss ways of capitalizing on recent developments to increase the visibility, impact and funding of genetic diversity research on campus. For example, conservation genetics is clearly within the mission of two recently formed centers, CCSF and the Center for Comparative and Population Genomics, and is central to the mission of the Institute for Genomic Diversity. These initiatives and the complementary strengths of Cornell faculty provide opportunities to collaboratively advance genetic diversity research and training at Cornell.