

ACSF Topical Lunch

Wednesday March 14, 2018

Building Research Collaborations and Capacity at Cornell for the Study of International Disaster Preparedness, Recovery, and Resilience

Summary

This topical lunch brought together Cornell faculty with faculty leaders of the Mario Einaudi Center's Working Group on Disasters and visiting speaker Professor Emeritus Anthony Oliver-Smith of the University of Florida, to discuss strategies building campus collaboration around research on disasters. Professor Oliver-Smith is a leader in the field of Disaster Anthropology has done anthropological research and consultation on issues relating to disasters and involuntary resettlement. His work on disasters has focused on post-disaster aid and reconstruction; vulnerability analysis and social organization, including class/race/ethnicity/gender based patterns of differential aid distribution; social consensus and conflict; and social mobilization of community-based reconstruction efforts. Cornell's Working Group on Disasters aims to foster greater awareness, collaboration, and research activity among social, physical, and behavioral scientists at Cornell and around the world in the study of international disaster preparedness, recovery, and resilience.

Twenty faculty and graduate students participated in the lunch discussion, which centered on identifying existing research on campus and areas of common interest and concern. Ongoing research focuses on disasters that arise from a variety of hazards including both natural and technological, and spans the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. It was widely recognized that disasters are caused by the interaction of environmental, social and technological factors and the complications that this causes for disaster management and policy were discussed. A confluence of many factors leads to much greater negative impacts of disasters for poor countries and vulnerable communities and the need to reframe disaster management and policy in recognition of disasters as a social-ecological construct was raised and expanded on by many participants. Potential for collaboration between the Einaudi Center and the Atkinson Center on disasters research was discussed. Faculty and graduate students were invited to join the Working Group's listserve to receive invitations to future events.