When we talk about Cornell, we can describe the institution in many ways. Cornell has a beautiful campus; it is diverse; it is Ivy League; it is an American university with a global scope; it is cutting-edge. There are numerous ways to talk about Cornell research: it transcends disciplines; it directly involves students; it promotes teaching at its best; it’s usable; it’s authentically interdisciplinary; it’s dynamic, forever pushing the cutting edge.

Cornell faculty and student researchers, however, put meaning to these words and phrases. For example, when they talk about interdisciplinary research, there is an authenticity that goes beyond simple words of description. They reveal innovation that spans many disciplines and how this cross-disciplinary work itself creates the innovation that transcends disciplines. In essence, no description is better than having the faculty and students make the institution and its environs, and their part in it, come to life.

This issue of Connecting with Cornell is special because it brings together 11 faculty from across broad disciplines (biological, physical, medical, and social sciences and the humanities) to tell not just their stories of research at Cornell, but also to give you a glimpse of how they spend their lives both on and off campus and why they chose Cornell and the Ithaca community. The issue also includes an expanded feature on undergraduate researchers.

Here, we meet 11 of Cornell’s young faculty who are innovators in their fields. By the time you have read what they have to say about their research and Cornell and its environs, you will have a good idea of the DNA of Cornell.

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