

MEET THE TATKON CENTER STUDENT STAFF SPRING 2022
and sign up for the Tat Buddies Program
Mentors help you settle in faster and discover all things Cornell!



Name: Avery Putnam

Hometown: Sherman, CT

Year: 2022

Major: Industrial and Labor Relations

Minor(s): Information Science: Networks, Spanish

Hobbies and interests: I love doing anything outdoors and being crafty! At Cornell I love running on campus and through the different beautiful Ithaca neighborhoods, as well as hiking in the Fingerlakes area! I am a big fan of the outdoors. I am also heavily involved in community service on campus. Service has been a staple in my life since 7th grade, so I love being a part of APO, Cornell Cameradery, and Cornell Reflect! I am also passionate about business and am now the president of PSE, a business organization on campus.

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: I am currently pursuing a career in business (likely consulting) after graduation. I did a for-credit internship spring 2021 through the ILR school. Professionally, I am very interested in the economic implications of data and information security, and my goal one day is to be fluent in Spanish.

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student: I wish that I realized how fast this time flies by. I am a strong advocate for exploring all of your interests and any opportunity that arises. I had some of my favorite Cornell experiences through putting myself outside of my comfort zone and embracing every opportunity with an open mind and open arms!

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Name:Jenna Chiarella

Hometown: Harrison, NY

Year: 2024

Major: Industrial and Labor Relations

Minors: Law and Society, Business, Italian

Hobbies and Interests: I have always had a love for sports, and have become involved at Cornell by joining the club basketball and field hockey teams and also the ILR Sports Business Club. Also, I am extremely interested in social justice initiatives, and the Cornell ACLU has helped develop my knowledge of recent movements. I am also involved in Greek life at Cornell. Finally, I love listening to music of all kinds, so send any recommendations my way!

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: I want to be able to make a difference in other people's lives. As mentioned before, I am very interested in social justice issues, and I hope to build on this interest through the field of law. After attending law school, I hope to use my knowledge to defend the rights of those who are less familiar with the intricacies of law.

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student: Nothing is set in stone! It may feel as though everyone around you has their life and career figured out except you. This isn't true! It is totally normal to change your major or not know what career you want to pursue. That's what college is for. I would tell my freshman self to stress less about post-grad plans and instead think about which classes pique my interest, because that is what will help you find your way.

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Name: Nahbuma Gana

Hometown: Bethesda, Maryland

Year: 2022

Major: Information Science

Minor(s): Fashion Studies, Communication

Hobbies and Interests: Besides the Tatkon Center, I'm the current Marketing Director for The Wardrobe, the Vice President of Inclusion for Cornell Panhellenic, and a product designer for Cornell Design and Tech Initiative and Engineers Without Borders. Some of my hobbies include illustrating, dancing and up-cycling clothes!

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: At Cornell, I've taken advantage of the numerous opportunities to join project teams and startups founded by Cornell students. This has helped me build my career and experience while still being a full-time student. In the future, I look to go into product/UX design and eventually become a creative/art director.

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student: I wish I knew that it's okay to take risks and try new things. Even if you're not extremely good at something at first, if you love it and are passionate enough you can turn it into something that is meaningful and something you stick with in the long run.

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Name: Niko Nguyen

Hometown: Fremont, California

Year: 2022

Major: Communication

Minor(s): English, Psychology, Media Studies

Hobbies and Interests: I'm super passionate about writing, design, and media — so a lot of my extracurriculars at Cornell reflect those interests! I am active in both the Design and Opinion sections of The Cornell Daily Sun, Cornell's student-run newspaper. I'm also an editor for Slope Media Group and a writing tutor for the Cornell Writing Centers.

Outside of my school involvements, you can find me running around Ithaca, rewatching episodes of Avatar the Last Airbender, streaming any of my countless Spotify playlists, or reading!

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: I've always had difficulty narrowing down my career options, but my time at Cornell has really helped me define more clear and realistic paths for the future. Specifically, writing for The Cornell Daily Sun and staying engaged with the Communication Department has inspired me to pursue a career in journalism, writing, or marketing. I don't plan to attend grad school in the future, but I look forward to getting hands-on work experience soon!

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student: Take advantage of your time here! Most of us are only here for a few years — which means you've got a short amount of time to take full advantage of everything that Cornell has to offer. Reach out and make new friends in your classes, watch as many Slope sunsets as possible, email your cool professors about research opportunities, go to book talks and concerts, join new clubs!

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Name: Alizeh Khan

Hometown: Binghamton, NY

Year: 2022

Major: Information Science

Minor(s): Biology, Nutrition

Hobbies and interests: I have a strong passion for art, ethics, social justice, and mental health advocacy. All of these are combined through my role as the founder and president of The Yellow Paint Society, a new club that explores the intersections between mental health and social justice through art. I also volunteer at the Ithaca Youth Bureau's College Discovery Program, serving as a tutor and mentor for low-income students in the Ithaca School District. Additionally, I participate in undergraduate research in the Molecular Nutrition Department, serve as an RA for the Multicultural Program House (McLLU), design programs for Cornell Minds Matter as an Officer of Campus Outreach, dance with the Assorted Aces, rock out with the Ukulele Club, and make artwork and stickers for my RedBubble shop in my free time.

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: Honestly, this is a very tricky question for me. Being in my last year at Cornell, I think I've at least narrowed it down to something in the healthcare industry. I really love the science and process of research that goes on behind medical innovation so I'm considering becoming a physician or a clinical researcher. But I also feel like medical informatics and healthcare technologies are really interesting and important fields that are often overlooked, especially when considering the ethical implications and need for equitable reform in healthcare for underserved populations.

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student: I wish I had known my own value and worth as an intelligent and well-rounded person. When I first came to Cornell, I struggled a lot with Imposter Syndrome, which unfortunately is a pretty common experience for most students here. As cheesy as it sounds, I've come to realize that I, along with everyone else here, undoubtedly deserve to be here. If you ever doubt whether you belong at Cornell, talk to me about it and I can assure you that most certainly do! :)

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Name: Paine

Hometown: Arlington, VA

Year: 2024

Major: Urban and Regional Studies (AAP)

Minor: TBD

Hobbies and interests:

I enjoy playing many sports - athletics/track, bowling, and will be a member of the Student Assembly this year! Places you can find me are the track, the pool, and the Risley dining hall! I'm a big transportation nerd and would be happy to help with any of your TCAT/navigation needs - welcome to Ithaca!

Professional interests/aspirations/passions:

I'm currently aspiring to be a transportation planner or engineer for a public transit department or consulting firm. At Cornell I took multiple graduate courses which are a bit more challenging but also a great opportunity and learning experience. Last summer I did a virtual internship with the Institute for African Development, and I was able to conduct research with the Department of Roads in Ghana. I took a variety of elective classes (look for some 1-2 credit ones!) which explored a fun topic with little to no pressure (pass/fail). Explore the course roster and have a fun time! I recommend HE 1115 to help adjust to college life.

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student:

How to acclimate to dorm life better and a residential lifestyle.

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Name: Esther

Hometown: Garland, TX

Year: 2023

Major: Global and Public Health Sciences

Minor: Healthcare Policy, Inequality Studies

Hobbies and interests: I consider myself to be a very creative person who loves to indulge in different activities and hobbies like reading, swimming, painting, and creating new playlists on Spotify. I have a strong passion for health, advocacy, culture, and mental health, and on campus I am involved in several clubs and extracurriculars that embody those passions. I am in Yellow Paint Society, a club that focuses on the intersection of mental health, social justice, and art. I work with the International Operations sub-team in Scholars in Our Society and Africa which is a club that focuses on enriching communities in the African diaspora. I am part of the advocacy committee for Partners in Health - Engage, which is a club that focuses on service, advocacy, and fundraising for different public and global health efforts. Additionally, I am also part of Wanawake Wa Wari which is both a cooperative housing that accommodates Black women on campus as well as an organization that focuses on community service and engagement and hosts cultural and social activities.

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: I am passionate about all things public health! Although I have not narrowed down exactly which sector I will be primarily engaged in, I have strong interests in community health, epidemiology, healthcare policy and advocacy, healthcare consulting, and healthcare management. I hope to go to grad school to possibly pursue an MPH, MHA, MPA, or some combination of them! At Cornell I have had the opportunity to work with the Cornell Cooperative Extension Program on two different projects that focus on different areas of public health, program intervention, and nutrition. Through my internships with this program, I have gained valuable experience and knowledge that I hope to carry with me as a future public health worker and advocate.

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student: I wish I had known that it is okay to explore different interests whether they are personal, academic, or career related. One of the beauties of being at Cornell is that there are many niche spaces, clubs, activities, and classes that appeal to different people and different interests that you have the opportunity to engage in! I would advise to not be afraid to divert from the plan that you may have devised prior to coming to college. College is the time where you really get to discover different interests and actually develop them, so make sure to take advantage of that!

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Name: Alexandra

Hometown: New York City

Year: 2024

Major: Undeclared - Mathematics and Philosophy

Minor: East Asian Studies

Hobbies and interests:

I am a member of the engineering project team CUAir. Last year I worked on software development, and this semester I will be working in fundraising/marketing. I am also a member of WICC (Women in Computing @ Cornell). Additionally, I love yoga, and can often be found drinking a smoothie on the Arts Quad.

Professional interests/aspirations/passions:

I am just a rising sophomore, but I am pretty certain I want to continue with academia after graduation (keeping my eye on either grad school or law school at the moment). Right now, I love research and have spent the summer as a research assistant with one of the Cornell Einaudi programs.

What do you wish you would have known as a first year student:

Cornell is really hard, but everyone thinks it is. It is alright to struggle, in some ways it can even be nice, but everyone here at one point has had the same feeling and there are many ways to help. Also! If you want to join a type of club or internship, just keep applying and eventually one will hit.

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Name: Collins

Hometown: Harare, Zimbabwe

Year: 2022

Major: Mathematics (Economics Concentration)

Hobbies and interests: I enjoy spending time with friends and family. I rate quality time spent with loved ones as one of the most enjoyable things one can do. I also enjoy reading and being active. My favourite books and movies are the Harry Potter books and movies. I am a huge fan of football (soccer). I am also currently Vice-President of Publicity of the Cornell Actuarial Society, and a College of Arts and Sciences Ambassador and Peer-Advisor.

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: I am pursuing a career as an actuary. This has been my dream since I was 7 years old. Being a part of the Cornell Actuarial Society has really given me a community of people with similar dreams as mine and we help each other. Since joining the Executive Board of the Society, I have learned a lot of practical and social skills that will definitely help me in the future. After graduation, I hope to have secured a great job as an actuary and I am also considering going to Grad School for an MBA.

What do you wish you would have known as a first-year student: I wish I had known to explore more. I had no idea time moved so fast. I would tell my younger self to reach out and try new things. Don't be scared to make mistakes and when things get tough hang in there. You will always get through it.

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Name: Julia

Hometown: Greenville, SC

Year: 2024

Major: Operations Research Engineering

Hobbies and interests: In addition to working at Tatkon, I am on the Cornell Rocketry project team as a business team member, and I am also involved in Women in Computing at Cornell, the Society for Women Engineers, and Greek life. I am also a part of the Meinig Scholar Program for leadership. Some of my hobbies include photography, exploring nature, graphic design, playing with my dog, swimming, and water-skiing.

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: I am not 100% sure yet about life after Cornell, but academically, I am interested in the intersection of technology and business as it relates to Operations Engineering. I am currently planning on minoring in either Computer Science or Data Analytics, and would like to possibly work in the future doing process efficiency, supply chain research, or product management with a focus on analysis of data. I am also considering an MBA after Cornell.

What do you wish you would have known as a first-year student: As a first-year student, I wish I would have known not to put so much pressure on myself to be the perfect freshman. At Cornell, I was overwhelmed by the number of clubs and opportunities here.

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Name: Amy Rosenblatt

Hometown: White Plains, NY

Year: 2023

Major: Human Development

Hobbies and interests: Hiking, guitar, anything outdoorsy

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: Interested in consumer insight and behavioral psychology

What do you wish you would have known as a first-year student: I wish I had known how hard it is for everyone to adjust to college and how everyone will feel settled eventually.

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Name: Marlee Pincus

Hometown: Westchester, NY

Year: 2024

Major: Biological Engineering **Minor:** Spanish

Hobbies and interests: I am a big outdoors person and I love going on spontaneous adventures! I also enjoy playing guitar, hanging out with friends, and running!

Professional interests/aspirations/passions: I am on the pre-med track and hope to one day use my knowledge of the Spanish language to tackle health inequity in our society. I am also involved in cancer research on campus

What do you wish you would have known as a first-year student: It is ok to not have everything figured out! College is all about having different experiences to find out what interests you. Don't be afraid to try something new and to make mistakes!