THERE’S MORE TO COME AFTER OUR SUCCESSFUL KICK-OFF EVENT!

We’ve had a terrific response to our 2020 Kick-Off event conducted via Zoom on September 9th. Approximately 300 students participated in over 30 virtual booths where eship resources answered questions and talked about opportunities. If you missed the live event, you can view a recording. Our staff is here to help all students, faculty, staff and alumni on their journeys through the Cornell eship ecosystem.

Zach Shulman ’87, JD ’90, Director, Entrepreneurship at Cornell
LIBRARIANS AID STARTUPS

Finding accurate data to size a potential market, to determine emerging trends and to understand the competitive landscape can be a daunting process for new entrepreneurs. During the customer discovery phase, founders conduct primary research by interviewing potential customers, but then the founders need to explore the larger context of their business idea. Cornell’s librarians are available to help.

Last fall, four librarians went through the NSF-iCorps short course training with the aim to better understand the process of founding a business. This past spring, fourteen additional librarians from across Cornell University Library also completed training. The result in now a strong team of library science professionals available to support student entrepreneurs who are pursuing business ideas at any stage and in virtually any discipline, any industry.

“The biggest piece we offer is the strategy piece. Entrepreneurs have such vastly different questions and needs that there is no single database or resource to answer them all. We listen to a student’s idea. Then we offer them our expertise and knowledge and connections to the larger ecosystem like my colleagues in engineering, law, science, or access to government databases – whatever they need.” said Rachel Holder, Business Research & Instruction Librarian at the Management Library.

As an example, Holder cited an experience with one well-prepared student who had done her customer discovery but “she needed to learn where her competitors were and where her target demographic lived. She had spent hours looking at census data and mapping it herself. I spent five minutes with her and we had it all done.”

Holder noted that students frequently come in with a one-off question but there are other issues that their conversations bring to light. “We have hundreds of databases and it is like trying to drink from a firehose. Students don’t know where to look. We purchase very expensive resources so that students can find the best answers,” continued Holder. “The benefits of working with the Cornell librarians is that we can help you find reputable resources and all the things you are never going to find using Google.”

Allison Latham, MBA ’20, who worked as a Big Red Venture Fund portfolio manager said, “BRV is a very student run capital fund. Rachel guided us to and taught us how to effectively use sources within the management library to come up with really robust due diligence on companies we were researching. Without the librarians’ help, it would have been difficult to know where to go to determine answers to questions like ‘what is the size of the market that this startup might capture?’”
Latham, who upon graduation started working full-time with Barclays Investment Division, said her Cornell training on how to use Bloomberg Fact Set helped her in early work at Barclay.

“Something that I did not realize until late in my time at Cornell was the willingness of the librarians to support my individual work,” said Marla Leana Beyer, MBA ‘20, co-founder and CEO of Hopscotch, a pediatric behavioral health platform. “I found it tremendously helpful to sit down with the librarians who picked up really quickly on what I wanted to do and came back with suggestions of resources for me to explore.”

Beyer noted that her access to the Cornell library also aided her work while doing an internship at UnitedHealthcare Group. Although UHG in-house resources are robust, they were difficult for her to access during the fast-paced summer internship.

“I used the Cornell library journal databases because I was developing programs for different populations. I was looking at other health care initiatives that had been implemented to determine the efficacies of the programs to serve the needs of the target populations. Just having access to such a large amount of content so quickly through Cornell benefited me tremendously,” said Beyer.

How may this Cornell experience benefit Beyer’s long-term goals?

“Since I’m now working full-time on my own healthcare startup, it remains critical for me to refine my understanding of the industry, to continually see the new research that is coming out and to learn about evidence-based practices. While I can no longer access the Cornell library resources, what I learned about research during my time at Cornell will serve me well throughout my career.”

The Hopscotch team, which was part of the eLab 2019-2020 cohort, have recently participated in the Harvard Innovation Lab’s Venture Program, are now doing Launch New York and have just been accepted into the Johnson and Johnson Innovation Accelerator.

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The Management Library is one of Cornell’s 18 libraries. All are operating in a hybrid mode for the current semester. For more information about the resources available to entrepreneurship students, visit http://Johnson.library.cornell.edu

To schedule an appointment with a librarian email: mgtref@cornell.edu

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS
NOVEMBER 13th

11:00 AM EST – 5:00 PM EST (ONLINE)

Michelle Adelman ’89 - Accite Holdings
Emin Gun Sirer – Ava Labs
Katia Beauchamp - Birchbox
Ryan Hudson ’89 - Honey
Steve Hindy ’71, MAT ’73 - Brooklyn Brewery Corp.
Polina Marinova- The Profile (emcee)
Jeremy Cohen – photographer
Tiffany Norwood ’89 - Tribetan
Scott Belsky ’02 – author, investor (emcee)
On May 22nd, rapStudy was the winner of the “technology and entertainment” track and took the grand prize in the NYS Business Plan Competition. Co-founders Drew Speckman ’21 ILR and Cosimo Fabrizio ’22 A&S now have 40+ people on their team driving the development of their proprietary platform that provides k-12 students with academic content via song lyrics placed to hip beats and performed by professional vocalists and musicians. rapStudy’s initial focus is to pilot test in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

“Usually we find each school has four to fifteen teachers willing to pilot the program. They get full access to all content and give feedback about the platform. Then they are invited to send us content which we then turn into a song,” said Fabrizio who, when not attending to Cornell academic responsibilities, is a professional guitarist playing backup to Wynton Marsalis’ performances in NYC.

“My pop is a teacher and Drew and I have a lot of close friends in education. So, we knew that anything we did, the teachers had to be front and center to creating the content,” said Fabrizio.

“We know that science and math and social studies are essential topics in schools around the world and we wanted to make content around that. Our content is ‘standards aligned’. We find content that is not necessarily applicable to a one-off classroom, but rather is part of a framework that is related to one which a district, state or country follows. The first 30 songs that we produced were aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. We also did NYS social studies and songs aligned to the ‘smarter balance/aspect balance’ standards for mathematics,” said Speckman who received a Marla and Barry Beck Entrepreneurship Fellows award to help support his work on rapStudy during the summer. To date, the team has produced over 100 songs.

Ten engineers are working on the product development in collaboration with six designers who put a bright, engaging face and feel to presentation of the content. A smaller team, which speaks the language of educators, is responsible for sourcing the academic content.

Included in the platform are functions which facilitate self-paced instruction. There is a fill in the blank exercise and teachers may generate a quiz with multiple choice questions that if answered incorrectly, the platform returns the student back to the song lyrics where the correct answer appears.

At its core, rapStudy is a music company. While the majority of team members are from Cornell, the co-founders draw upon a network of young musical artists managed by a close friend who is a student at the University of Southern California. "We are very proud of the fact that you are listening to art! It is so refreshing for the teachers who find creativity in this coursework," emphasized Fabrizio.

“We have told [team members] that rapStudy is to be in addition to their life at Cornell and because of that, they’ve been able to carve out a piece of this that they can call their own. For Cosi and I, it’s something that lets us step away from our studies to have fun and do something which will make an impact,” said Speckman.”
“The fact that our mission is so genuine, so actionable and so capable of making a difference in peoples’ lives, the hours that we spend late night in Drew’s apartment – he’s remodeled his apartment to become the rapStudy headquarters and you won’t find a bed, only people working and jamming - people are excited to make a difference. An hour of hard work translates directly into a kid having a better experience on a Zoom call about second grade fractions,” continued Fabrizio.

Mentored by Felix Litvinsky, director of the Blackstone LaunchPad at Cornell, and Celia Bigoness, founder of Cornell’s Entrepreneurship Law Clinic, the rapStudy team says the need for access to learning in ways not previously conceived has been accelerated by the pandemic. Beyond K-12 schools their market includes after-school programs, home-school, vocational training and international educators.

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ZALAZNICK AWARDS ’20–’21

EIGHT FACULTY MEMBERS RECEIVE FUNDING

Established in 1993 by David W. Zalaznick ’76 and his wife Barbara ’76 to honor David’s father, the Zalaznick Awards are provided to faculty members in support of special projects or to hire teaching assistants.

During the ’20–’21 academic year, the recipients are: Mike Timmons, Professor of Biological and Environmental Engineering, CALS; Wes Sine, Professor of Management and Organization, JCB; John Callister, Harvey Kinzelberg Director of Entrepreneurship, ENG; Steven Gal, Senior Lecturer, JCB; Brooke Hollis, Lecturer, Sloan Program, HUMEC; Charles Whitehead, Professor of Business Law, LAW; Celia Bigoness, Associate Clinical Professor and Director of the Entrepreneurship Law Clinic, LAW; and Robert Karpman, Adjunct Professor and Director of the Business Minor for Life Sciences, JCB.

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