**2. Cornell**

*Major: Ecology And Evolutionary Biology (College of Agriculture And Life Science/CALS)*

College Questions:

None

Writing Supplement:

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Why are you drawn to studying the major you have selected? Please discuss how your interests and related experiences have influenced your choice. Specifically, how will an education from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) and Cornell University help you achieve your academic goals? (650 words max)

I have always liked biology even before I knew it was called biology. By the eighth grade, when I was still doing integrated science where science was a mixture of all biology, chemistry, and physics; I had finished Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* and a collection of Richard Dawkins books that detailed exciting stories of evolution.

The following summers, I subsequently explored many aspects of animal fields; ranging from vet care in a nearby clinic, zoo care at a local zoo, animal rescue and conservation in Singapore, to herpetology research in a lab at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. Throughout my stint at various institutions handling hundreds of animals, I realized that I was most fond of reptiles because of how long they date back in the fossil record.

My favorite memories involving reptiles included going out on night-rescue trips with my supervisor during my internship at ACREs. In fact, I was taught how to handle snakes with my bare hands by my supervisor. I eventually realized that I want to study more about the role of snakes in the environment, which lead to my decision to pursue a degree in ecology and evolutionary biology.

I absolutely loved the world of herpetology and read nearly every reptile research that was available. Secretly, I even had a favorite reptile: the snake. As a species labelled with bad connotations, I found that snakes have countless conflict with humans. I hope that, by the year 2032, I could work as part of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in Indonesia to be a part of research and implementation of new policies for Indonesia’s flora and fauna. I aim to protect Indonesian wildlife and help mitigate human-animal relationships through the policies.

Feeling determined , I read r science journals to science journals and eventually found *Snakes: The Evolution of Mystery in Nature* by Harry Greene, a New York Times best seller and recipient of a PEN award. Dr. Greene is an incredible inspiring person and also a professor from the Ecology and Evolutionary department at Cornell. His work on *Hunter-Gatherers And Other Primates as Prey, Predators, And Competitors of Snakes* is my favorite research article because of its nature in the evolutionary field.

Dr. Greene talks about evolutionary history between the two species, the snake and primate. Humans have evolved from great apes, and many humans have retained an evolutionary fear for snakes to the point where snakes have been painted in pop culture. I found this article mind-blowing, my interest in evolutionary biology grew exponentially. I wanted to follow with Dr. Greene’s footsteps.

Through Dr. Greene I grew interested in Cornell. Taught by world-class professors, I’d imagine that Cornell’s BIOEE4700 class on Herpetology, and the BIOEE1780 class about Evolutionary Biology and Diversity would be very engaging and interesting classes. The learning outcomes of the class in which the student would be able to classify and discuss morphology is something that I’m always curious about.

Aside from the research opportunities and breakthroughs, Cornell offers plenty of chances to learn outside of the classroom. The most interesting one is a study abroad trip to the Galapagos to see the Galapagos turtles in their habitat to study conservation issues,. Having taken care of Galapagos turtle(s) at the Ragunan Zoological Park before, it would be exciting to visit them again in their actual place of origin. Thus, I would love to continue studying it to broaden my knowledge to do the research in mitigating human-animal conflict.

I also believe the Cornell community is the best fit for me. There are many traditions in Cornell that I find particularly interesting, including the Dragon Day celebration (mainly because dragons are like snakes which are why I love them), and the Chime’s concert with the bells. I also enjoy the daily events that Cornell hosts as an exciting way to challenge their students. In particular, I would love to attend the ‘Arachnophilia: A Passion of Spiders” exhibit or the seminar on “NBB PhD Defense: Maria Mondau” to know more about the behavioral and genomic consequences of evolution under skewed sex ratios.

With Cornell’s unique study programs, exciting events and seminars, and professors whose work I admire, Cornell will help me grow holistically as a person. I would not only be studying inside the classroom walls; I would be studying outside and everywhere. Just like what Cornell Global Learning’s motto says: “Every Person. Every Study. Everywhere.”

Hi Elysa,

Nice essay! I can see that you’re really interested in the major and know what you want to do in the future. Please find my comments and corrections on the document. Looking forward to reading the next draft.

Cheers!

Matahari Kinanti

All-in Essay Editor

Previous Edits

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I have always liked biology even before I knew it was called biology. By eighth grade, when I was still doing integrative science where science has been a mixture of all biology, chemistry, and physics; I finished Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* and a collection of Richard Dawkins books that talk about the study of evolution.

During the summers of 9th, 10th, and 11th grade, I explored many aspects of animal fields; ranging from vet care in a nearby clinic, zoo care at a local zoo, animal rescue and conservation in Singapore and herpetology research in the lab at Indonesian Institute of Sciences. Handling hundreds of animals during my stint at various institutions, I realized that I was most fond of reptiles because of how long they date back in the fossil record.

My internship experience in ACREs, I went through some night-rescue trips with my supervisor. It was a very exhilarating experience which I thoroughly enjoyed. In fact, I was even taught how to handle snakes with my bare hands by my supervisor. Eventually I realized that I want to study more about the role of snakes in the environment which confirms my decision to study ecology and evolutionary biology.

Since then, I delved into the world of herpetology. I read every reptile research that was available. As a species labelled with bad connotations, I found that snakes have countless conflict with humans. I hope that, by the year 2032, I could work in Indonesia as part of the Ministry of Environment And Forestry to research and implement new policies for Indonesia’s flora and fauna. I aim to protect Indonesian wildlife and help mitigate human-animal relationships through the policies.

Pursuing my dream, I went after science journal to science journal and eventually bumped into a book *Snakes: The Evolution of Mystery in Nature* by Harry Greene, which was praised by the New York Times and even won a PEN award. Dr. Greene is a professor from the Ecology and Evolutionary department of Cornell. His work on *Hunter-Gatherers And Other Primates as Prey, Predators, And Competitors of Snakes* is my favorite research article because of its nature in the evolutionary field.

Dr. Greene talks about evolutionary history between the two species, the snake and primate.

Humans have evolved from great apes, and many humans have retained an evolutionary fear for snakes to the point where snakes have been painted in pop culture. I found this article mind-blowing, realizing that evolutionary biology is much more interesting than I initially thought. I wanted to follow with Dr. Greene’s footsteps.

Through Dr. Harry Greene was when I first started to explore more about Cornell. Taught by world-class professors, I’d imagine that Cornell’s BioEE4700 class on Herpetology and the BioEE1780 class about Evolutionary Biology and Diversity would be very engaging and interesting classes. The learning outcomes of the class in which the student would be able to classify and discuss morphology is something that I'm always curious about.

Aside from the research opportunities and breakthroughs, Cornell offers plenty of chances to learn outside of its classroom. The most interesting one is a study abroad trip to Galapagos to see the Galapagos turtles in their habitat and to study conservation issues, supervised by Dr. Irby J. Lovette. I’ve taken care of Galapagos turtle in Ragunan Zoological Park. The turtle were still babies. Thus, I would love to continue studying it to broaden my knowledge to do the research in mitigating human-animal conflict.

I also believe the Cornell community is the best fit for me. There are many traditions in Cornell that I find particularly interesting, including the Dragon Day celebration (mainly because dragons are like snakes which are why I love them), and the Chime’s concert with the bells. I also really enjoy the daily events that Cornell throws to their students in order to challenge them. I would love to attend the ‘Arachnophillia: A Passion of Spiders’ exhibit that is led by Linda Rayor or the seminar on ‘NBB PhD Defense: Maria Mondau’ to know more about the behavioral and genomic consequences of evolution under skewed sex ratios.

The environment study programs that is present in Cornell, the events, the seminars and the professors whose works I admire would make me grow as a person. I would not only be studying inside the classroom walls; I would be studying outside and everywhere. Just like what Cornell Global Learning's motto says: ‘Every Person. Every Study. Everywhere.’