

Ella Taagen

QUANTITATIVE GENETICIST · DATA VISUALIZATION EXPERT · USA & EU CITIZEN

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Summary

As a quantitative geneticist, I love to explore the relationships between multi-omics data and phenotypic variation and am driven by their potential to enhance plant adaptability and genetic gain. Open-source initiatives and interdisciplinary communication are core pillars of my creative and critical thinking approach to problem solving and team management. I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Plant Genetics at Cornell University with an expected graduation spring 2022, and am drawn to career paths in industry at the intersection of genetics, bioinformatics, and molecular biology.

Expertise

Quantitative Genetics	genome to phenome modeling, RNA-seq analysis, large genome data management (17 Gb)
Programming	R, Linux command line, LaTeX, skillful data visualization
Bioinformatics	reproducible analyses, Git, multi-omics data analysis
Statistics	experimental design, generalized linear and mixed model, supervised statistical learning
Transferable	interdisciplinary communication, independent learner, creative problem solver, industry professionalism

Relevant Experience

Simulating controlled recombination in polyploid genomes

Cornell University

PH.D. | ADVISOR DR. MARK SORRELLS

2017 - Present

- Leveraging simulation and bioinformatics tools to better understand controlled recombination's potential to reveal currently inaccessible genetic diversity and increase control over the inheritance of preferred haplotypes.
- Exploring the biological constraints of meiotic recombination and prediction-based decisions in a plant breeding context.

Fine-mapping grain morphology gene in wheat

Cornell University

PH.D. | ADVISOR DR. MARK SORRELLS

2017 - Present

- Applying traditional population development strategies, along with cutting-edge tools in genomics and transcriptomics to better understand the landscape of causal variation based breeding decisions.
- Fine-mapping and characterizing temporal expression profile of grain morphology gene, [talk video link](#), peer feedback: **4.8/5**

Small grains breeding and value chain engagement

Washington State University

POST-BACCALAUREATE | ADVISOR DR. STEPHEN JONES

2016 - 2017

- Surveyed and engaged supply chain stakeholders when setting breeding objectives.
- Delivered lab and field support for graduate student breeding projects sourced from a broad base of genetic diversity.

Circadian rhythm and mechanism of growth-phase transitions in Arabidopsis

University of Washington

UNDERGRADUATE | ADVISOR DR. TAKATO IMAIZUMI

2016 - 2017

- Assessed mechanistic sequence of genes involved in vegetative to reproductive growth transition and characterized circadian rhythm gene.
- Showcased at undergraduate research symposium.

Center for Global Infectious Disease Research, tuberculosis

Seattle, WA

UNDERGRADUATE LAB ASSISTANT | DR. DAVID SHERMAN

2013 - 2014

- Supported communication between researchers and maintained solution stocks for the lab.
- Developed a standardized protocol for unique growth media based on experimental design.

Mentorship & Management

Corteva and Cornell School of Integrative Plant Science (SIPS) networking

Cornell University

COORDINATOR

2020 - Present

- Built network and relationship pipeline with Corteva Global Academic Relations Manager and Cornell SIPS industry partnerships liaison.
- Developed system for matching 24 graduate students with Corteva scientists based on shared career interests.

Synopsis, Plant Breeding and Genetics GSA

Cornell University

PRESIDENT

2019-2020

- Executed 2020 graduate student recruitment visitation for 15 students.
- Oversaw communication between current plant breeding and genetics students and faculty.
- Co-authored [survey](#) and [visualized results](#) to assess SIPS graduate student satisfaction and concerns with unification of the five sections, career path exploration, mental health resources and inclusion initiatives.

Plant Breeding and Genetics faculty search committee

Cornell University

COMMITTEE MEMBER, GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

2019-2020

- Screened and evaluated 54 applicant packages, and conducted full day interviews with top 3 candidates (research /teaching /chalk-talk).
- Facilitated graduate student meetings with top candidates and documented graduate student preferences for clear communication to faculty.

Jannink/Sorrells lab meetings

Cornell University

COORDINATOR

2018-Present

- Streamlined meeting schedule and presentation rotations with access to centralized Google drive for 18 people across 2 lab groups.
- Unified communication across listserv, Slack, and Zoom.

Graduate student mentor

Cornell University

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

2018-2020

- Hired, trained, and mentored three talented undergraduate research assistants and supervised one honors thesis
- Coached one graduate school application and interview process, accepted to five plant sciences PhD programs.

Bonsai Professional Coaching Service

Virtual

MENTEE

2018-2020

- Partnered with leadership coach Loriana Sekarski to identify and apply personalized Clifton Strengths by Gallup.
- Trained in STEM industry professionalism and charted conflict management strategies.
- Top five strengths: *Learner, Achiever, Focus, Communication, Individualization*.

Graduate Women in Science

Cornell University

EXECUTIVE OF ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

2017-2019

- Operated digital outreach and authored biweekly newsletter for >400 listserv members.
- Devised and improved advocacy, educational, and social events based on polled membership interests.

Awards & Scholarships

2020 **Borlaug Scholar**, National Association of Plant Breeders

USA

2020 **3rd Place**, C7 Plant and Animal Genome conference poster competition

San Diego, CA, USA

2019 **Awardee**, Cornell IARD winter interim travel grant

India

2018 **Awardee**, ASA, CSSA and SSSA Congressional Visit Day travel grant

Washington DC

2018 **Future Leader in Science**, ASA, CSSA and SSSA

USA

Relevant Workshops

Enrolled **Statistical Learning**, ten-week course

edX Stanford Online

2020 **Collaborative and Reproducible Data Science in R**, Cornell NTRES 6940

Ithaca, NY

2019 **Linux for Biologists**, Cornell University Institute of Biotechnology

Ithaca, NY

2018 **Finding Your Research Voice**, science communications and presentations

Ithaca, NY

2018 **Breeding for Quantitative Traits in Plants**, book club facilitator

Ithaca NY

2017 **Tucson Plant Breeding Institute**, quantitative genetics bootcamp

Ithaca, NY

Education

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY, USA

PH.D. IN PLANT GENETICS

2017 - expected 2022

- Minors: Plant Molecular Biology and International Agriculture and Rural Development

University of Washington

Seattle, WA, USA

B.S. IN MOLECULAR, CELLULAR, DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY

2012 - 2016

- Minor: Nutritional Sciences

Publications

1. **Taagen, E.**, Bogdanove, A. J. & Sorrells, M. E. *Counting on Crossovers: Controlled Recombination for Plant Breeding*. (2020) Trends in Plant Science
2. **Taagen, E.**, Bogdanove, A. J. & Sorrells, M. E. *Achieving Controlled Recombination with Targeted Cleavage and Epigenetic Modifiers*. (2020) Trends in Plant Science
3. Sweeney, D. W., Sun, J., **Taagen, E.** & Sorrells, M. E. *Genomic Selection in Wheat*. (Woodhead Publishing, (2019) in *Applications of Genetic and Genomic Research in Cereals*, 273-302
4. Song, Y.H. *et al.* *Molecular basis of flowering under natural long-day conditions in Arabidopsis*. (2018) Nature Plants