Mission Statement

The FIG Research Laboratory is a group of interdisciplinary stakeholders conducting academic research and developing strategies to prevent childhood obesity and to address health disparities through a socio-ecological lens. Our mission is to leverage community assets, diverse methods, and team science to build capacity for equitable health in priority populations.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

The FIG Research Laboratory embraces Cornell’s "Any Person, Any Study." founding mission. Our group is committed to diversity and inclusiveness across campus; "where intercultural skills are developed and used everywhere: throughout our diverse campus groups, with our community partners, within our classrooms and in our workplaces.” Everyone is and will be welcomed, celebrated, and respected in the FIG Research Laboratory environment. Learn more about Cornell University’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee Initiatives.

Equity and Respect Statement

The FIG Research Laboratory is dedicated to promoting equity and respect across domains. In our group, we share Cornell’s institutional commitment to “providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning, living, and working environment” for all its members. We also “share the responsibility for creating a safer, more caring campus culture in which bias, harassment, and violence have no place—and every member of our community is free to flourish.” Please refer to Cornell University’s Title IX resources and statement for additional information.

“Self-care and Work-Life Balance” Statement

The FIG Research Laboratory urges its group members, as artistically and eloquently proposed by O’Dwyer, Pinto, & McDonough (2017), to: “demand and protect the time, space, and reflective practice” to balance activities within and outside of academia. We encourage our members to adopt strategies that best suits their productivity and self-care needs. Learn more about Cornell University’s self-care, work-life balance resources, and the seven dimensions of well-being.

About Me

Dr. Figueroa is a public health scientist who combines concepts and methods across disciplinary boundaries to examine interconnections between the social and behavioral determinants of health and nutrition, with a particular focus on children’s energy-balance behaviors in underrepresented and low-income communities. His research includes studies on children’s energy balance behaviors in early childhood education and family contexts, as well as public perceptions of the obesity epidemic in the US and global cultures.

Remember:

“You are at your best when your physical, mental, and emotional needs are being met.”
General Expectations:

There are no set of requirements or general expectations for members of the FiG Lab beyond conducting ethically-sound, rigorous laboratory research. In doing so, members are expected to delve into areas not very well understood yet (or requiring better understanding).

In such process, we are encouraged to:
- ask good questions,
- formulate testable hypotheses,
- design, implement, execute (and other times evaluate) research processes, and
- analyze data without a bias towards a particular “answer”.

Many times, in research, we will fail to reject null hypotheses and our challenge is to learn from these and examine new questions and/or test new hypotheses. While more experienced members of the team may have ideas about what to try, please remember that in research, the whole point is that no one really knows yet.

Your curiosity, creativity, and willingness to innovate (try, fail, and try again) are valued and encouraged.

(Adapted from: NEFFW 2017 [https://faculty.northeastern.edu/advance/faculty-recruitment/future-faculty-workshop/ffw-2017/])

Authorship Guidelines:

Decisions regarding authorship will be agreed upon in the early stages of abstracts, grants and manuscripts development. Constructive discussions to assign authorship roles can also be set up as an on-going process in situations where early decisions might need to be re-visited. This general authorship guideline from NIH will be used in the meantime to conceptualize authorship contributions and roles.

Important Information

Training

Members of the FIG Lab should consult with Cornell’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) regarding individual needs for ethics and responsible conduct of research (RCR) training to conduct academic research. In addition, it is highly recommended to acquire training through CITI prior to participating in any research activities in the lab. Consult with the director if you have further questions.

Lab organization

The FIG Research Laboratory is physically located in Ithaca, NY (Cornell University campus). The specific location is Savage Hall, room 411. The FIG Lab director, Dr. Figueroa, is at his faculty office directly across from 411 Savage Hall (room 412). A remote lab is also available for key members participating in specific research projects through a web application called Asana. This remote space is a system for members of the FIG lab to collaborate/communicate remotely as a team.

Group and individual meetings

Based on individual availability, members of the FIG lab will meet as a group and individually as agreed upon. Each academic term, the team will come to a consensus about a regular schedule for term meetings to discuss research projects. Remote presence in these meetings is also encouraged.

Data security and storage

In the FIG lab, two (2) key approaches will be considered to address data security, storage, and management. First, members of the FIG lab will consult with specialists across the data lifecycle, the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research (CISER) prior to working on research projects that require handling/managing data. Secondly, an archive to store files, including data files, will be developed through Cornell Box ([https://cornell.account.box.com/login](https://cornell.account.box.com/login)). In the meantime, consult Dr. Figueroa on best practices until these two approaches are pursued regularly by members of the lab.

Breaks and vacation

Members of the FIG lab are encouraged to take breaks and vacation as needed. It would be ideal to provide a notice in advance of any break or vacation plans, but not required. Please consult with your immediate departmental unit and/or university’s policies regarding breaks and vacation.

Requesting letters of support

Please refer to the Letter of Support Template below.
Please send the **following 3 items** to me **at least 2 weeks** before the earliest deadline. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional details.

1. **LETTER OF SUPPORT FORM:**

   **Name:**
   **Email Address:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Award/Program/School</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Concentration (if applicable)</th>
<th>Whom it should be addressed to</th>
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</table>

   *add more rows as necessary*

   **Summary of the following:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do I know you?</th>
<th>Place answer here.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long have I known you?</td>
<td>Place answer here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What qualities would you like me to highlight?</td>
<td>Place answer here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **YOUR CV/RESUME**

3. **A COVER LETTER/PERSONAL STATEMENT**

(Adapted from Hardesty, J., UIUC)
University Mission Statement
(https://www.cornell.edu/about/mission.cfm)

**Cornell's mission** is to discover, preserve and disseminate knowledge, to educate the next generation of global citizens, and to promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell University community.

Division of Nutritional Sciences Mission Statement
(https://www.human.cornell.edu/dns/about)

The academic field of nutrition is multidisciplinary at its foundation because of its integration of scientific knowledge across the physical sciences, life sciences, and social and behavioral sciences. The nutritional sciences embrace theories and methods across many academic disciplines to understand the complex relationships among human health, nutritional status, human genetics, food and lifestyle patterns, social and institutional environments and governmental policies.

Understanding these relationships necessitates the study of:

- Human metabolic regulation and function of nutrients
- The influence of genetic/epigenetic variation on nutrient function
- The role of nutrients in genome programming
- Nutrient requirements through the life span
- The role of diet in reducing risk of disease
- Nutritional quality of foods
- Relationships among food/agriculture systems and health
- Interventions and policies designed to promote nutritional health and well-being of individuals and populations

Scholarly activities across the disciplinary spectrum are undertaken in both developed and less developed countries. They address causes and consequences of inadequate or inappropriate nutrition resulting from both over-and under-consumption of food and nutrients.

This multidisciplinary nature of DNS is also manifested in its placement within the organizational structure at Cornell as it bridges CALS and CHE. These two colleges represent two important forces in our society: agriculture and human ecology. Expertise across these disciplines is required to address many of the most pressing nutritional problems facing individuals, societies and governments.
### Systematic Program of Academic Research: Figueroa Interdisciplinary Group (FIG) Laboratory

**Situation:** Childhood obesity; Health disparities; Contextual conditions in priority populations (SDoH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs (What we invest)</th>
<th>Outputs (What we do and who we do it to/with)</th>
<th>Outcomes – Impact (The incremental events/changes that occur as a result of the outputs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group members (advocates, community stakeholders, facilitators, partners, principal investigator, staff, students, trainers, volunteers)</td>
<td>Coalition development (i.e., community partnerships, needs and resource assessment, stakeholder engagement)</td>
<td>Acquire training prior to execution of projects (on-going)</td>
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<td>Resources (i.e., infrastructure, equipment, funding)</td>
<td>Collaborative opportunities</td>
<td>Assess needs and resources among priority populations (on-going)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information and Technology (i.e., computers, data, research dissemination, software)</td>
<td>Data management and analysis (including secondary data analyses)</td>
<td>Daily writing (~30min/day)</td>
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<td>Grant writing</td>
<td>Establish healthy relationships, trust, and sustain community partnerships with priority populations (on-going)</td>
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<td>Pilot data collection</td>
<td>Establish system to ethically analyze, collect, manage, secure, and store data from projects (by Fall 2019)</td>
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<td>Research implementation and dissemination</td>
<td>Produce and disseminate research outputs (on-going)</td>
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<td>Training (i.e., CBPR, communication, ethics and responsible conduct of research, research methods, professional development, software, team science)</td>
<td>Seek external funds for career development and pilot research annually (on-going)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Example of program evaluation questions:</th>
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<th>Example of program evaluation questions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is the effectiveness of these inputs in helping to accomplish the long term goal?</td>
<td>• Acquire training prior to execution of projects (on-going)</td>
<td>• Did the program target the right participants?</td>
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<td>o Was funding for the program adequate?</td>
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<td>• Did group members fulfill their roles?</td>
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<td>o Were trainers effective?</td>
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<td>• Were these program goals met?</td>
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<td>• Did trainees accomplished their goals?</td>
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<td>• Do participants have equitable access to health?</td>
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### Assumptions

Adequate funds are available. Participation is expected from all parties. Socio-ecological lens through which group preliminarily assesses problem.

### External Factors

Set timeline is flexible. Time constraints will be variable across sub-groups. Current degree of capacity and resources at community-level is unknown.

(Abbreviated version; adapted from OPM.gov)
Figueroa Interdisciplinary Group (FIG) Laboratory
Conceptual Framework

LIFE COURSE INFLUENCES (ie. history, politics, society, environment, culture) over time

Childhood Obesity

CHILDREN'S ENERGY BALANCE
(1) Diet (2) Physical Activity
(3) Sleep (4) Sedentary Behaviors

CAREGIVING/PARENTING
(1) Roles and dynamics (2) Practices
(3) Behaviors (4) Outcomes

SOCI-CULTURAL FACTORS
(1) Race/Ethnicity (2) Acculturation
(3) Ethnic identity (4) Socioeconomic Status