

2026

cornell **iGEM**

Synthetic Biology Project Team

Sponsorship Packet

Partner With Us

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CORNELL UNIVERSITY
ITHACA, NEW YORK

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Synthetic Biology Project Team

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TEAM LEADS LETTER

BY NICOLETTA SODINI AND GEORGE ZENG

2026 Team Leads

Welcome to the 2026 Cornell International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) project team! Thank you so much for your interest and consideration in sponsoring our team this season. Our team is composed of 52 undergraduates, spanning diverse backgrounds over five colleges, integrated together to create an impactful project within the field of synthetic biology. Each year we strive to address pressing local and global challenges. By supporting us, you join and empower our mission to change the world, one microbe at a time.

We showcase our annual projects at the iGEM Grand Jamboree, the world's premier and largest synthetic biology competition held in Paris, France. It unites high school, undergraduate, and graduate teams from institutions spanning the globe. With over 4500 participants from 421 teams last year, the event provided an unparalleled platform for teams to present their innovative solutions to environmental, biomedical, and industrial applications. Cornell iGEM boasts an impressive track record in this competition, earning twelve gold medal classifications in the past fifteen years. Our projects have earned multiple accolades, including Best Hardware and Best Space awards last year with our most recent project PROSPER. Our team has also been awarded Best Supporting Entrepreneurship (twice!), Best Applied Design, Best Undergraduate Environmental Project, and Best Integrated Human Practices throughout the years. But most importantly, we are dedicated to providing a project that helps the public and furthers scientific discovery for years to come.

Beyond the competition, Cornell iGEM is dedicated to public engagement within the Ithaca community and beyond. Our goal is to make synthetic biology education accessible for people of all demographics. We cultivate learning opportunities at local elementary schools, nursing homes, the Ithaca Farmers Market, and community events such as the Syracuse MakerFaire. We remain committed to giving back to the community that endlessly inspires us to create genuine positive change in the world.

The incredible work that this team does simply would not be possible without the support of our generous sponsors. They provide us with the vital resources we need to innovate novel synthetic biology solutions for real-world problems. By supporting us, sponsors not only enable these ambitions, but also gain access to the quickly growing pool of students, researchers, and industry professionals that are a part of our iGEM community. As a valued partner, your company will be prominently featured on our team apparel, website, presentation materials, and poster. We will also showcase any potential recruiting opportunities offered by you to our team as another way of saying thank you.

Our website offers a comprehensive overview of our past projects and can be found at <https://igem.engineering.cornell.edu>. In addition, this packet contains a detailed breakdown of our budget, team, and accomplishments.

Thank you again for your consideration in supporting Cornell iGEM, and we hope to work with you soon!

Best,



WHAT IS iGEM?

SYN BIO COMMUNITY

International Genetically Engineered Machines

iGEM began in 2003, and has since grown into the world's largest synthetic biology competition, now hosting over 300 teams from around the world as of 2025. At the beginning of the season, each team receives a kit distribution plate of synthetic DNA parts from the iGEM headquarters. Using these constructs and parts of their own design, teams use synthetic DNA components, or "BioBricks" to create novel, genetically engineered organisms which tackle various real-world problems. Teams compete each year at the international iGEM Grand Jamboree and are judged based on the quality of their biological work, the significance and applicability of their project, human practices and safety components, and the presentation of the work via their website, poster, and a formal oral presentation. The Jamboree is not only a competition; it is a synthetic biology symposium that brings in thousands of students, industry professionals, investors, policy experts, and more like-minded individuals.



The Parts Registry

One of the iGEM competition's greatest goals is the development and cultivation of the Standard Registry of Biological Parts. This parts registry contains thousands of synthetic DNA components designed to be modular: every part in the registry can be interchanged within common DNA backbones, allowing researchers to easily create novel genetic circuits for important engineering purposes. After every competition season, iGEM teams submit their genetic parts (called "BioBricks") to the parts registry for future teams and researchers to use. This collaboration is essential to the iGEM competition and research in synthetic biology in general, and it ensures that any research done by our team and others can be utilized by the scientific community as a whole for years to come.



THE CORNELL TEAM

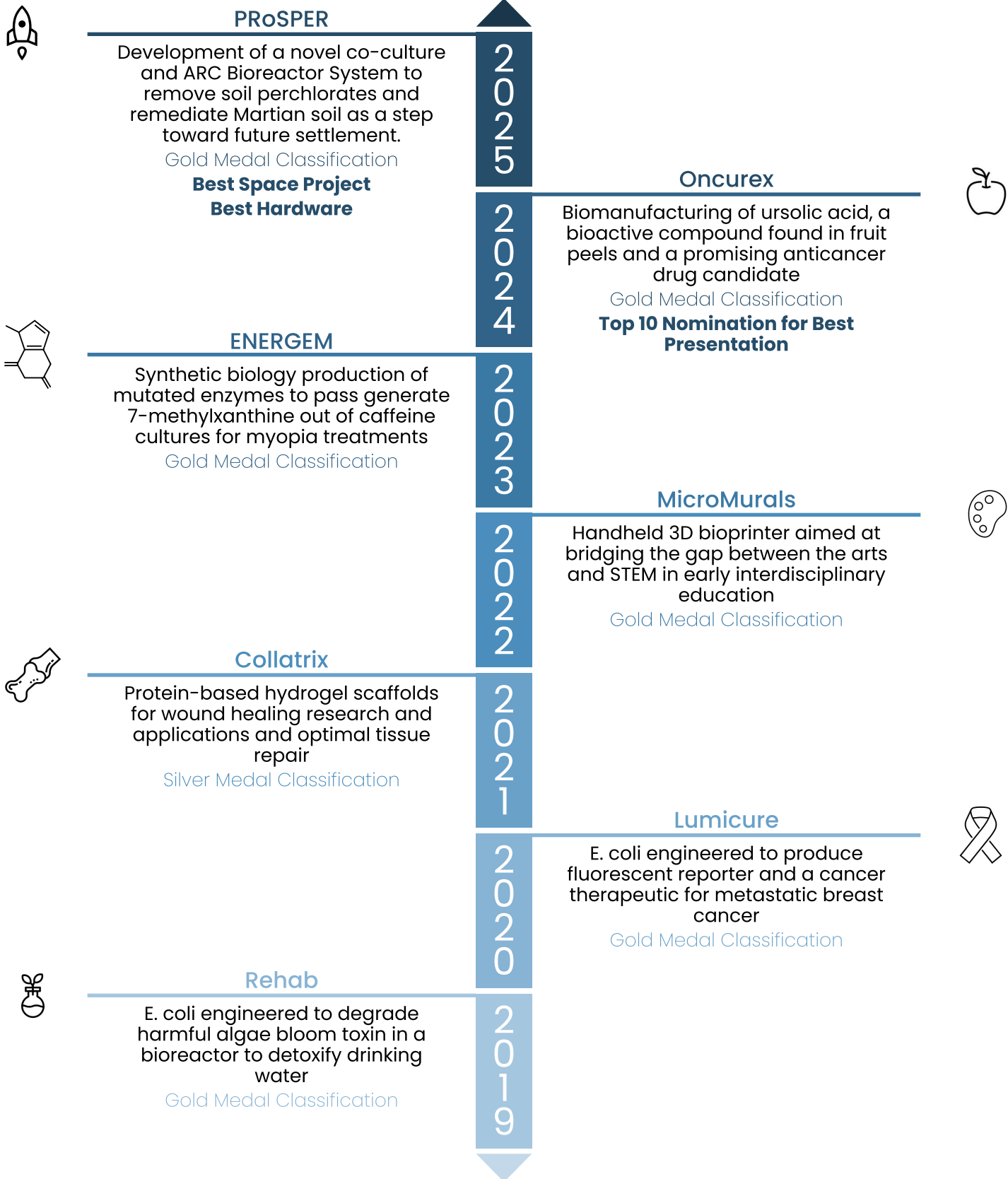
51 STUDENTS, 4 COLLEGES

2025 Paris Team

Cornell iGEM is an undergraduate synthetic biology team and has solidified itself as a perennial contender at iGEM competitions. The team, founded in 2009, is still relatively new, but recent successes have helped the team gain prominence at both the university and the iGEM competition. Our team is composed of 51 undergraduate students from five colleges across the university (Engineering, Arts & Sciences, Agriculture & Life Sciences, Human Ecology, and the Nolan School of Hotel Administration). This diverse group of students uses their different expertise to complete a complex and novel project each year. Cornell iGEM provides dedicated students who have a desire to pursue biological research and engineering an opportunity to gain experience in a professional work environment, hone their practical engineering skills, and pursue their own research goals. Our team prides ourselves on sharing our research and promoting safety with regards to the controversial field of synthetic biology. In doing so, we are developing the next generation of responsible scientists with the potential to bring synthetic biology to the forefront of modern engineering solutions.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS





TRACE

Tissue Repair through Anti Collagen Expression

Our 2026 Project

Skin injuries are among the most common form of trauma, but the human body's natural healing process has not been optimized to regenerate healthy skin tissue. Overexpression of proliferative pathways leads to fibrotic scarring, resulting in reduced functionality, diminished quality of life, and lasting psychological effects for individuals with burns, autoimmune diseases, and other skin injuries. At the same time, current medical devices and cosmetic post-fibrotic treatments used to reduce scarring rely on non-biodegradable materials or resource-heavy surgical interventions, contributing to unnecessary waste and environmental burden.

To address these challenges, team Cornell proposes TRACE (Tissue Repair through Anti Collagen Expression): an adaptive and sustainable cosmetic bandage that minimizes the appearance of scars and improves the functionality of healed tissue. TRACE utilizes the probiotic *L. sakei*, which is genetically engineered to produce and secrete a CTGF-inhibiting peptide. When induced by signals associated with a fibrotic healing environment, the peptide is designed to reduce the formation of over-contracted, less functional tissue during the healing process. This "smart" cosmetic treatment would be housed and delivered via an electrospun nanofiber matrix, designed for optimal healing conditions and long-term sustainability through its biocompatible and biodegradable composition. Sourced from naturally derived materials, the bandage is designed to minimize excess material use, as seen in traditional treatments that use silicone sheets and single-use plastics.

By combining synthetic biology with environmentally conscious design, TRACE represents a shift towards light-footprint, high-impact cosmetic therapies. Introducing this technology to the market could redefine patient recovery, by improving cosmetic outcomes, enhancing quality of life, and reducing the environmental footprint of skin trauma care.

2026 PROJECT BUDGET

Project Expenses

Expenses	Cost
OligoPrimer and Gene Synthesis	\$2,000
DNA Sequencing	\$500
Molecular Biology Reagents	\$4,000
Plasticware and Lab Supplies	\$3,000
Product Development and Hardware	\$3,600
Software Licensing	\$1,300
Outreach Supplies	\$350
Training Fee, Printing	\$400
	Total \$15,150

Competition Expenses

Expenses	Cost
Team Registration	\$9,000
Individual Passes	\$5,250
10 passes x \$525/each	
Travel Expenses	\$7,000
Lodging	\$6,600
4 rooms x 7 nights	
	Total \$27,850

Grand Total \$43,000



Our 2025 Project in Review



We connected with various demographics in the local community to teach and survey general synthetic biology knowledge.



We calculated the cost effectiveness of our designs at industrial scale and developed a business plan for licensing our technology.



We developed a novel co-culture system between *E. coli* and *Synechococcus* to efficiently degrade perchlorates



We designed a fully modular ARC bioreactor system, available to use for iGEM teams and projects for years to come



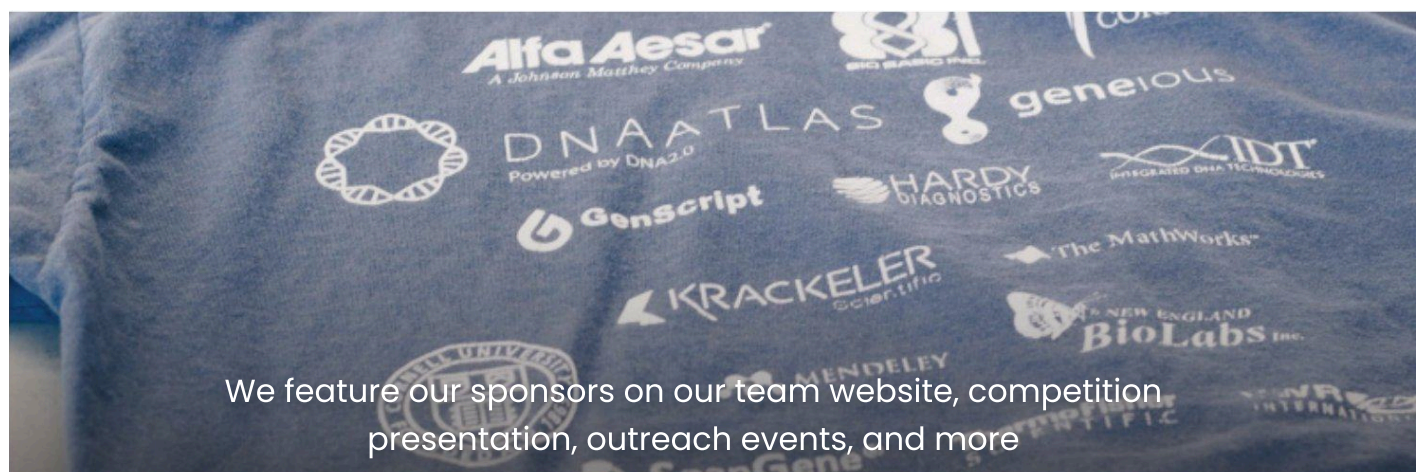
We received Best Space and Best Hardware awards alongside gold medal classification at the iGEM Grand Jamboree in October 2025

SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

Competition Visibility

By sponsoring Cornell iGEM, your company will gain unrivaled exposure at the world's largest international synthetic biology competition, which hosts over 400 teams and 4,500 participants annually. Your company logo will be prominently featured on our competition poster, presentation, and project Wiki, showcasing your brand to an elite audience of researchers, students, and industry professionals.

Furthermore, our team's website and Wiki continue to receive significant traffic, averaging around 700 hits per month even after the competition, ensuring ongoing visibility for your brand. Our outstanding performance in recent seasons has led to Cornell iGEM being featured in renowned publications such as Elsevier, the Cornell Chronicle, the Cornell Daily Sun, IDT's Decoded, and Popular Science, as well as newsletters from our past and current sponsors. By supporting Cornell iGEM, your company will be associated with a prestigious and innovative team, gaining invaluable recognition and networking opportunities within the synthetic biology community.



University Networking

As a sponsor of Cornell iGEM, your company will gain access to an extensive network at one of the world's most prestigious research universities. Our team's strong connections with students and research labs across Cornell University create numerous opportunities for sponsors to engage with top-tier talent and cutting-edge research.

Our young and dynamic alumni network, which continuously grows each year, is an invaluable resource for our sponsors. By supporting our team, you will be part of a community where graduating members are eager to pursue careers in biology and engineering, and many of them may consider your company for their next career move. By partnering with Cornell iGEM, you are not only investing in groundbreaking research but also in the future leaders of the synthetic biology industry.

YOUR SPONSORSHIP

Gifts in Kind

- Centrifuge tubes (2 mL, 15 mL, 50 mL) and micropipette tips
- PCR reagents (DNA polymerase, dNTPs, etc.)
- Antibiotics (Chloramphenicol, Kanamycin, Ampicillin)
- Gel electrophoresis materials (Agarose, TAE Buffer, DNA Ladder, Ethidium Bromide)
- Molecular biology kits (Plasmid miniprep, DNA clean and concentration)
- Electroporation cuvettes
- Polyethylene Oxide (PEO) Polymer
- Biopolymer Sodium Alginate (SA)
- Polysorbate 80 (PS80)
- Media components (LB Broth, Yeast Extract, Tryptone, various salts)
- Software licenses
- Electrical & mechanical engineering tools

Monetary Support

Our team also accepts any monetary support. Monetary support enables us to acquire essential resources and equipment that cannot be received in kind, ensuring the continued growth and development of our projects. Your contributions will be allocated towards crucial expenses such as custom primers, DNA sequencing, iGEM registration fees, travel and lodging for competition, and establishing a savings fund for future Cornell iGEM teams.

Intellectual Partnership

In addition to receiving donations from sponsors, we have also formed partnerships with businesses in the past. In 2013, Cornell iGEM made great strides in bridging the gap between the iGEM competition and industry. Our collaboration with Ecovative, a leading biomaterials company, proved to be the most meaningful and in-depth partnership between an iGEM team and a corporation to date. Each year, our projects present unique opportunities for collaboration, and we are eager to work with businesses to address challenges using synthetic biology.

DONATION FORM

Supporting Our Efforts

Cornell iGEM provides promising undergraduate scientists and engineers the opportunity to pursue their own research interests in a supportive team environment. While Cornell does provide our team with laboratory space, access to some of its outstanding facilities, and funding for competition fees and travel, funding for individual components of our project must come from generous, outside sponsors. If you are interested in supporting our efforts this year and becoming a part of an exciting and successful synthetic biology team, please fill out the following form and return it to the provided address. Checks can be made payable to "Cornell iGEM" and attached to this form. If you have any questions about our team or specific support we could use, please don't hesitate to contact us. We greatly appreciate support of any kind. Thank you for your time!

Mailing Address

Attn: George Zeng
Cornell iGEM
134 Hollister Dr
391A Thurston Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853

Contact Information

Team Leads: Nicoletta Sodini and George Zeng
Phone: (773) 499-4002, (682) 256-1260
Email: cornelligem@gmail.com
Website: igem.engineering.cornell.edu

General Information

Name of Organization: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Information

Contact Name: _____ Contact Title: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Donation Information

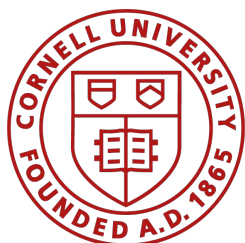
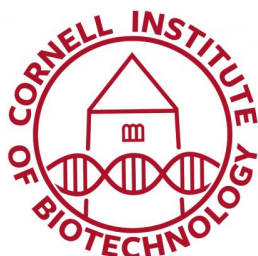
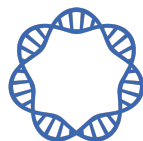
Gift in Kind

What is the gift in kind? _____
What is the market value of the gift in kind? _____

Monetary Donation

What is the donation amount? _____
Donor Signature: _____ Date: _____

THANK YOU PAST SPONSORS!



CornellEngineering
Alumni Association