

Dr. Avery August



"Now looking back, I revel in the
incredible diversity and deep history of
Belize."

Dr. Avery August is currently a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor, Professor of Immunology and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at Cornell University. He is also Co-Director of the Cornell Center for Health Equity, and a member of the Cornell Institute for Host-Microbe Interaction and Disease and the Cornell Center for Immunology at Cornell University. Dr. August was born in Belize City, Belize, and attended St. John's Primary School (now Anglican Cathedral College), and St. Michael's College (now Maud Williams High School), before leaving Belize to join his mother, Ms. Alice Robinson (nee August) in Los Angeles. There he attended Los Angeles High School, before leaving in the 11th grade to earn a GED and attend Los Angeles City College where he made the Dean's Honor List. He then transferred to the California State University in Los Angeles, where he also made the Dean's Honor List and subsequently earned a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Medical Technology. At California State University in Los Angeles, he was introduced to research, working in the research laboratory of Dr. Phoebe Dea. He then attended Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences at Cornell University in New York City, where he earned a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Immunology. At Cornell he performed research to understand how T cells in the immune system are turned on during infection.



Following his Ph.D. training, Dr. August gained additional training as a Post-Doctoral Fellow (supported by the National Science Foundation) in the laboratory of Dr. Hidesaburo Hanafusa at The Rockefeller University in New York City. At The Rockefeller University, he performed research to understand the function of the breast cancer gene BRCA1. Following his time at The Rockefeller University, he worked for the R.W. Johnson Pharmaceutical Research Institute for a short time, before becoming an Assistant Professor at The Pennsylvania State University, performing research on the molecular basis for the development of allergic

asthma. He moved through the ranks to attain tenure and become Distinguished Professor of Immunology. At Penn State, he developed the Alcorn State: Penn State Bridges to the Doctorate Program, as well as served as Director of the Center for Molecular Immunology and Infectious Disease and Director of the Molecular Medicine Graduate Program.

Dr. August then moved to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, as Professor of Immunology, and Chair of the Department of Microbiology & Immunology. There, he continued his research in the molecular basis for the development of asthma, as well as on understanding inflammation, and how the immune system develops memory during vaccinations. At Cornell, he was the Principal Investigator for the Cornell Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training (BEST) program and directed the Center for Infection and Pathobiology. He is currently Principal Investigator of the Cornell Initiative to Maximize Student Development, and co-Principal Investigator of the Cornell Sloan Scholars program, and the Cornell ImmunoEngineering training program.

Dr. August has published over 120 research papers that have been cited over 6,000 times and sits on the editorial board of a number of research journals and advisory boards, including on the Board of Trustees of the New York Blood Center. Dr. August has won a number of awards and recognition for his research and teaching, including the ASHI Scholar in Basic Sciences, Community of Scholars Teaching, American Society for Cell Biology E.E. Just Award, The American Society for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Ruth Kirschstein Diversity in Science Award, American Society for Microbiology/Indo-US Science & Technology Forum Research Professor, Outstanding Alumni Award from the Weil Graduate School of Medical Sciences at Cornell University, and recognized as one of 23 STEM superstars of PBS Newshour.