

# Cornell receives \$148K grant for research into no-waste apparel

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For research related to no-waste apparel design and breakthroughs in textile manufacturing, Cornell University has received a \$148,000 grant.

The Walmart Foundation and the U.S. Conference of Mayors announced earlier this month that Cornell is a 2016 U.S. Manufacturing Innovation Fund grant recipient. Cornell will receive \$148,000 from the fund, which supports research proposals that strive to create new manufacturing technologies and reduce the cost of producing goods in the U.S.

The grant recipients were chosen for the ability to address two current challenges for domestic manufacturing, including "reducing the cost of textile manufacturing, including home textiles and apparel, in the U.S. by addressing obstacles through production" and "improving common manufacturing processes with broad application to many types of consumer products," Walmart said in a news release.

Two faculty members in the department of fiber science and apparel design — Tasha Lewis and Anil Netravali — have developed a strategy to reduce energy and water needs associated with textile production and create an additional revenue stream from reclaimed apparel, according to the Cornell Chronicle.

"Our project aims to reduce the consumption of natural resources to create virgin textiles. And we're also trying to divert used and unwanted clothing away

from landfills — all the while putting textiles to better use as a raw material," Lewis told the Cornell Chronicle.

Lewis explained that a lot of water is consumed during the textile dyeing and finishing processes. Finding new ways to use discarded textiles is a way to save water and landfill space, Lewis said. "The fabric-shredding machine called Fiberizer — developed as a proof-of-concept with Anil Netravali, through funding from Cornell's Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future — transforms textile waste to make it usable for other products. So, we'll apply this U.S. Manufacturing Innovation Fund grant to develop an industrial-grade Fiberizer for small and medium-sized businesses."

Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick attended the conference and supported Cornell's bid for the grant. He said Lewis and Netravali have established strong links with local entities involved with recycling textiles, like SewGreen, All County Used Clothes and Catholic Charities.

"While the project has local implications, it also relates to ... the larger apparel manufacturing sector ... in New York," Myrick told the Cornell Chronicle. "This engagement aligns with the core land-grant mission of Cornell University and is a perfect representation of how the research activity on campus can serve the immediate needs of the community."

Cornell is one of five universities that received collectively \$2.84 million in grants. The fund was formed to provide a total of \$10 million in grants over the course of five years. This is the second

round of grants awarded by Walmart and the Walmart Foundation.

"Through these grants we hope to help remove the barriers to revitalizing and growing U.S. apparel manufacturing, while creating more sustainable production processes," said Kathleen McLaughlin, president of the Walmart Foundation and chief sustainability officer for Walmart. "The U.S. Manufacturing Innovation Fund is part of Walmart

and the Walmart Foundation's broader commitment to foster new economic growth and opportunity and create stronger communities."

Other universities that received a grant were Clemson University, Oregon State University, University of Texas at Austin and North Carolina State University.

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