

Three are awarded 2004 Guggenheim Fellowships

By Franklin Crawford and David Brand

Three Cornell faculty members are winners of prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship awards for 2004. They are among 185 artists, scholars and scientists from the United States and Canada selected from more than 3,200 applicants for this year's 80th annual competition totaling more than \$6.9 million.

The winners from Cornell include two members of the Department of English and a member of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. They are Roger Gilbert, professor of English; Douglas Mao, associate professor of English; and Edwin A. (Todd) Cowen, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering.

Guggenheim Fellowship award decisions are based on the recommendations of hundreds of expert advisers and the approval of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation's board of trustees. Winners are selected based on distinguished achievement in the past and exceptional promise for future accomplishment.

Cowen, director of the DeFrees Hydraulics Laboratory at Cornell, will use his fellowship award to study turbulence and sediment transport processes in the region of the beach where the sea meets the land and, thus, is alternatively dry and wet. Because this region, known as the swash zone, is the interface between land and sea, it is the primary area where beach erosion occurs.



Cowen

"My plan is to develop a fiberoptic-based particle image velocimetry system for use in both the laboratory and field on two-phase flows, in particular sediment-laden flows," Cowen said.

The Guggenheim award will allow Cowen to extend his research into a natural setting using his group's National Science Foundation-funded laboratory research which uses impermeable model beaches made from glass. The developed instrumentation research ultimately will be deployed on two different beaches to look at the small-scale details of turbulent sediment transport in the swash zone. The work will be carried out while Cowen is on sabbatical leave in Spain, working with the Environmental Flow Dynamics Research Group in the Andalusian Center of the Environment at the University of Granada.

Cowen joined the Cornell faculty in 1998. In 2002 he won the James and Mary Tien Excellence in Teaching Award. In 2001 he was a National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development award winner, and in the same year he won the Visualization Society of Japan's SGJ award.

Mao joined the Cornell faculty in 2002. His academic areas of interest include British and American poetry and fiction since about 1890; interdisciplinary study of modernism; literary theory; and gay, lesbian and bisexual studies.



Mao

The Guggenheim award will help Mao to complete his current project: a study concerning environmental influences on the developing human being and how ideas about such influences shaped the work of several important English-language writers from "about the end of the 19th century through the middle of the 20th," he said.

Among authors Mao will consider in his work are Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, Theodore Dreiser, Rebecca West, W.H. Auden, Richard Wright and Anthony Burgess.

"As a literary analysis grounded in close reading, the project aims to show how several extravagantly gifted, but also representative, writers wrestled with problems of developmental environment," said Mao. "It considers how British, Irish and United States writing since about 1890 has been shaped by an understanding of human development, now more or less commonplace, that gained a significant hold on the public imagination only in the middle of the 19th century."

**Gilbert**

Gilbert, the director of graduate studies in the English department, joined the Cornell faculty in 1987 and specializes in 20th century American poetry, British and American romantic poetry and American literature. The Guggenheim Fellowship will allow him to dedicate a full year to completing his critical biography of the late A.R. Ammons, Cornell's legendary bard and the university's Goldwin Smith Professor of Poetry emeritus, who died in 2001. The project's working title is *In the Wind My Rescue Is: The Life and Art of A.R. Ammons*, the first line taken from one of Ammons' early poems.

Gilbert is the author of numerous publications, including his first book, *Walks in the World: Representation and Experience in Modern American Poetry* (Princeton University Press, 1991). He's published essays on contemporary poetry, film, the Chicago Bulls, Frank Sinatra and applause, among other diverse subjects. He is the guest editor of the forthcoming special A.R. Ammons issue of *Epoch*, the Cornell Creative Writing Program's literary journal, due out in May. He also is co-editor, with Cornell alumnus David Burak '67, MFA '80, of *Considering the Radiance: Essays on the Poetry of A.R. Ammons*, which is due to be published by W.W. Norton in 2005.

Gilbert will spend much of his leave in Ithaca, researching materials on Ammons in Kroch Library's Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, where the bulk of the poet's personal papers have been archived. Gilbert said he also will travel to North Carolina, where Ammons was born and raised.

Both Gilbert and Mao said they were especially thrilled to receive the Guggenheims because the honor calls public attention to the continuing vitality of Cornell's Department of English.

April 22, 2004

[| Cornell Chronicle Front Page |](#) [| Table of Contents |](#) [| Cornell News Service Home Page |](#)