Senior honored for men's fashion line that mixes used clothing with organic textiles
By Sheri Hall

By designing a sustainable fashion line for young men that combines second-hand clothing with organic textiles, Cornell senior Heber Sanchez has reaped a $25,000 Geoffrey Beene National Scholarship.

The fashion line -- called Danger Ahead -- was made from garments that were purchased at a Salvation Army store and then dismantled and combined with organic textiles to create new styles.

"I didn't want to make this just about selling used clothes to people and making them think they were new," explained Sanchez, a fiber science and apparel design (FSAD) major. "When you think sustainable, you think homey or hippy. I didn't want that. I wanted the clothes to be well-designed and fashionable."

Sanchez said the competition helped him focus more on creating environmentally friendly clothing.

"Before, I never really thought about sustainability," he said. "Usually, I bought the most amazing fabric I could afford for my creations."

Sanchez also recently won a competitive design award from the International Textile and Apparel Association and earned two Barbara L. Kuhlman Inc. fibers arts scholarships in 2007 and 2008.

Sanchez came to Cornell from El Salvador as a pre-med major, but he transferred into FSAD during his freshman year.

"I took summer classes through the prefreshman summer program, and by the time that was over, I knew didn't want to become a doctor," he said. Sanchez said he has always loved clothes. He got his first sewing machine when he was 12 years old and used to make dresses for his sister's dolls.

Sanchez hopes to use his new scholarship to attend graduate school in design in London.

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