The Steve Wright Bridge Award goes to Rick Roper who has dedicated himself to veteran issues and helping veterans working in IPP and the larger Cornell community.

Veterans and veteran services are elements of diversity that are often overlooked when people think of diversity. Rick has worked tirelessly as an advocate for veterans in general and, specifically, through his participation in the Veterans Colleague Network Group (VCNG). Some of the events and initiatives Rick has planned or participated in include:

- Information table at the Annual Staff Development Day;
- Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans, hosted in collaboration with the School of Hotel Administration;
- Women Veterans Roundtable: Military Boots to Civilian Shoes, a conference exploring the challenges facing women veterans as they transition from service with a focus on recruitment, retention, and climate issues;
- Cornell’s 2014 Veterans Day, in collaboration with U.S. Navy Admiral Michelle Howard;
- Presentation to the University’s Diversity Council Leads, suggesting Towards New Destinations veteran-related recommendations and initiatives;
- Participation in the Soldier Story Day at Ithaca High School, sharing his military experiences with young people;
- Developing a mentor list of veteran staff/faculty willing to connect with new or prospective veteran staff members to offer guidance, insight, and resources; and
- Participation in the Team Red White and Blue, a national organization that encourages veteran re-integration through athletics and community outreach. (The VCNG formed a team which led to a significant increase in the organization’s activities and participants, hosting over 124 events, including weekly work outs.)

Rick works to broaden the membership of the VCNG and is committed to fostering a safe environment at Cornell for all veterans. He has a clear passion for veterans’ affairs and wellbeing that extends into the greater Cornell/Ithaca community to Cornell’s students, alumni and their families.

Rick was nominated by Erin Moore.