

THE DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS NUTRITION



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BUILDING TIES WITH CHINA

September found the Friedman School sharing its science and policy expertise with China in conjunction with the Tufts International Board of Overseers meeting in Beijing. **Eileen Kennedy**, dean of the school, spoke at Fudan University, where she presented research showing that Shanghai newborns weigh more today than they did in recent years. She also took part in the Asian Congress of Nutrition in Taipei, where she helped moderate a symposium on "Dietary Pattern, Health and Total Well-Being" and led a workshop titled "Formulation and Implementation of Nutrition Policy in the United States." Also at the Asian Congress, Visiting

Professor **Nevin Scrimshaw** and Associate Professor **Gary Gleason** conducted a workshop on research management and communications at the request of the participating countries. Professor Robert Russell, director of the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA), gave presentations on carotenoid research at Peking University and the CDC of China. Professor **Jeffrey Blumberg** discussed research related to the phytochemical composition of nuts, a complement to his earlier talk at a Beijing workshop sponsored by the International Life Sciences Institute Focal Point in China.

For more on the Friedman School's ongoing relationship with and research in China, visit http://nutrition.tufts.edu/1177953854318/Nutrition-Page-nl2w_1190036282090.html.

AIRING ON PBS

For 18 months, Miriam Nelson, director of the John Hancock Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition, and colleagues at Tufts worked closely with WGBH-TV in Boston to produce a NOVA documentary that explores what it takes to run a marathon. They followed 13 non-runners who trained for the 2007 Boston Marathon with the President's Marathon Challenge team at Tufts. The resulting episode, "Marathon Challenge," aired October 30. To go behind the scenes and find out other air dates and times, go to <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/marathon/>.

HERE & THERE

On October 11 and 12, the Friedman School co-sponsored a two-day conference with

Partners in Health and the Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health that focused on "Integrating Health, Nutrition and Food Security: Making the Case." The meeting provided operational and policy guidance on designing and implementing programs that more effectively integrate disease control, nutrition interventions and food security. The Friedman School team included Professor **Patrick Webb**, Associate Professor **Steven Block**, Assistant Professor **Jennifer Coates** and Professor **Christine Wanke** of the medical school.

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Associate Professor **Daniel Maxwell** visited Keene State College in New Hampshire to present the annual James D. Ewing World Affairs Lecture, named for the longtime owner and publisher of the *Keene Sentinel* newspaper. Maxwell's topic was "Famines and Humanitarian Action in the 21st Century."

Alice Lichtenstein, Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy and director of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at the HNRCA, has been selected to receive the 2007 Distinguished Achievement Award from the Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism of the American Heart Association.

Monique and **Jerry Sternin**, managers of the Positive Deviance Initiative, received the Dory Storms Recognition Award from the CORE group, an association of 47 international non-governmental organizations that promotes and improves the health and well-being of children and women in developing countries. The Sternins were recognized for "exceptional efforts resulting in more effective child survival program implementation and increased impact in improving the health of the poorest of the poor."

Peter Walker, Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and director of the Feinstein International Center, received the American College of Nutrition's annual Humanitarian Award at its 48th annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Walker chose to put the \$2,000 charity award into the scholarship fund for students who come to Tufts from overseas to enroll in the Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance program.

RESEARCH UPDATES

The Cardiovascular Nutrition Lab, under the leadership of **Alice Lichtenstein**, received a \$1.7 million grant from NIH/NIDDK to investigate the intra-individual reproducibility and inter-individual variability of glycemic index and glycemic load values. Assistant Professor **Nirupa Matthan** is also an investigator on the study.

Professor **Simin Nikbin Meydani**, director of the Nutritional Immunology Lab at the HNRCA, is the principal investigator on two studies that have been funded by the National Institutes of Health. One study, with co-investigators **Susan Roberts** and **Gerard Dallal**, will look at calorie restriction and immune response in people. The other, with co-investigator **Stephan Bunnell**, also of the immunology program, will look at age-related changes in the proteome and lipidome of the immunological synapse. In addition, the immunology lab recently published research showing that low blood levels of zinc may be linked to an increased risk of pneumonia in the elderly, suggesting the benefits of supplements for this at-risk

population.

FRIEDMAN FACULTY IN THE NEWS

In a discussion of food labels with National Public Radio, **Alice Lichtenstein** said that “the amount of information at the moment is quite overwhelming. And for certain foods, some of it is not necessarily helpful.” She said a simple system like the U.K.’s food traffic-light system would make nutrition information more accessible.

Assistant Professor **Kathleen Merrigan**, director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment Program, told “Greater Boston,” a program on WGBH-TV, that there is “provocative research going on that suggests organic is healthier.” Without the benefit of pesticides and fertilizers that help them grow, plants create protective compounds that are also “the same things we need for us to be healthy,” she said.

Associate Professor **Miriam Nelson** helped write new recommendations by the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American College of Sports Medicine, where she is a fellow, for physical activity and health in adults ages 65 and older. The recommendations were published in the August 2007 edition of *Circulation*, the journal of the AHA. She told the *Los Angeles Times*: “I firmly believe that we have underestimated as a culture, and maybe even in the field of exercise science, what older adults are capable of doing. It’s really important for people to realize that you should not underestimate what someone can do based on age, gender or chronic disease.”

Professor **Katherine Tucker**, lead author of a study on cola and bone health published last year, told the *Wall Street Journal* that more research is needed to determine the long-term effects of drinking cola. “The effect of dosing of phosphoric acid may be small at any one time, but a very small effect with a very constant habit may accumulate over many years,” she said.

Andrew Wilder of the Feinstein International Center was a guest at NPR affiliate WHYY in Philadelphia for a segment on corruption in the Afghan government. “We have this idea that elections are a bit of a panacea in a lot of these conflict/post-conflict situations,” he said. “We pushed to hold elections probably too early, and that was certainly the case in Afghanistan, when the real priority then was reestablishing some of the fundamental state institutions, providing security for the population and livelihoods.”

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Congratulations to **Jennie Bass**, N08, and her fiancé, Aric Egmont. He proposed to her through a crossword puzzle in the *Boston Globe Magazine*, a plan he schemed with the help of the puzzle writers at the newspaper. The clue to 111 across was “Generic proposal.” The fill-in answer was “Will you marry me?” Her answer was yes.

Blanche Ip, a staff member in the Lipid Metabolism Laboratory at the HNRCA, also likes to experiment in the kitchen. Her recipe for Earl Grey brownies won the “chocolate idol” recipe contest from the Langham Hotel in Boston. She now has unlimited access to the hotel’s weekly all-you-can-eat chocolate bar buffet, where her brownies will be featured among the more than 100 desserts. Her story was featured in the *Boston Globe*.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Award nominations

It's that time of year when we ask the help of faculty and alumni in recognizing outstanding Friedman School graduates. This year, nominations can be completed online. To access the online form, please go to

http://www.nutrition.tufts.edu/1178370555101/Nutrition-Page-nl2w_1190121731342.html. In addition, all alumni will receive a nomination form in the mail. It can be returned via fax to 617-636-3951, email to sean.devendorf@tufts.edu or mail to 150 Harrison Ave, Boston, MA 02111. Nominations must be received by November 15. Winners will be recognized during the annual All-Alumni Reunion on April 12-14, 2008. Save the date and join us for this opportunity to reconnect with old friends and mentors.

Calling all authors

Are you an alum who has written a book? If so, the Friedman School would love to hear from you. Please send an email to Lindsay Schoonmaker at lindsay.schoonmaker@tufts.edu with the book title, name of the publisher and publication date. Responses may be featured in the Class Notes section of *Tufts Nutrition*, the alumni magazine, and may be considered for the university's new author series "In Their Own Words." For more information on the series for 2007-08, go to www.tufts.edu/alumni/c-authors.html.

Job listings

The Friedman School is now posting job opportunities online at http://nutrition.tufts.edu/1174562918741/Nutrition-Page-nl2w_1177953853485.html.

COMING RIGHT UP

Hold the date for the inauguration of Professor **Lynne Ausman** as the first recipient of the Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi Professorship in International Nutrition. The celebration will take place on Tuesday, December 4, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. All students, faculty, alumni and friends are welcome to attend. Stay tuned for more information.

The deadline for the next issue of the *Dean's Letter for Tufts Nutrition* is Wednesday, November 28. Please send your submissions to Julie Flaherty at julie.flaherty@tufts.edu.

