

# THE DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS NUTRITION



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DECEMBER 2007

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## CHAIR IN INTERNATIONAL NUTRITION

In her inaugural lecture as the Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi Professor in International Nutrition this December, **Lynne Ausman** gave an overview of her illustrious career so far. "Helping students succeed is just about as rewarding as doing my own thing," she concluded, even if you don't get the same academic credit when people are ticking off papers. The ovation she received showed she gets plenty of credit for the work she is doing creating the master's degree in nutrition via distance learning, a collaboration of the Friedman School and the government of Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates.

## A SWEET CHALLENGE

Last year, Dean **Eileen Kennedy** issued a fundraising challenge to the school. Faculty and staff would be divided into three teams representing administration, science and social science. The leader of the team with the lowest participation rate would get a pie in the face. Although the race was very close, **Patrick Webb**, representing the social sciences, ended up wearing dessert at the December 5 faculty meeting. All told, in the last fiscal year, an unprecedented 35 percent of faculty and staff pledged to the Friedman School's annual fund, providing outstanding support for school priorities like student financial aid.

## FEINSTEIN INTERNATIONAL CENTER ISSUES TWO REPORTS

What is the true impact of humanitarian assistance? The Feinstein International Center has published the first in a series of four field studies that seek to answer that question. Partnering with five major NGOs and seven assistance programs in Africa, this research seeks to understand not just the expected impact but the total impact of a variety of humanitarian interventions. The study on the Gokwe Integrated Recovery Action Project in Zimbabwe by **John Burns** and **Omeno Suji** is available at [http://fic.tufts.edu/downloads/JohnZimbabwe\\_10\\_2\\_07.pdf](http://fic.tufts.edu/downloads/JohnZimbabwe_10_2_07.pdf).

Also at the Feinstein Center, Professor **Helen Young**, senior researcher **Abdalmonium el Khider Osman** and their colleagues recently completed a paper on livelihoods programming

in the Darfur region of Sudan. They concluded that conflict and insecurity are destroying livelihoods and the adaptations that particular livelihood groups make in turn fuel the conflict. The paper is available for download here: <http://fic.tufts.edu/downloads/DarfurLivelihoods.pdf>

## NEWS FROM THE FRANCES STERN NUTRITION CENTER

Professor **Carole Palmer** is the new program director for the master's degree program affiliated with the Frances Stern Nutrition Center. She will join Assistant Professor **Kelly Kane**, director of the internship program, in overseeing the Combined Dietetic Internship and Master's Degree Program at the center.

Dietetic interns at the Frances Stern Nutrition Center have been going beyond required clinical hours to make a difference in their profession. **Jessica Jones-Hughes**, N09, recently created a program plan for a new nutrition-based cooking class for Community Servings, a Boston nonprofit that provides free meals to critically ill individuals. She worked through all the details of the literature base, partnership, outreach and program setup, including creating outreach and educational materials. Another dietetic intern, **Alexis Howard**, N08, worked with **Kristy Hendricks**, associate professor, and Professor **Johanna Dwyer** to write a chapter for an American Dietetic Association (ADA) Handbook on HIV/AIDS. The chapter was on dietary supplement use and covered the prevalence of use; how to assess supplemental intake; how to evaluate the safety, quality and efficacy of the supplements; and tips on counseling patients about supplements. The first draft of the handbook was recently submitted to the ADA.

## AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Adjunct professor **Venkatesh Iyengar's** editorial on "Metrological Concepts for Enhancing the Reliability of Food and Nutritional Measurements," which appeared in *the Journal of Food Composition and Analysis*, was selected for an award by Co-operation on International Traceability in Analytical Chemistry for identifying new directions.

## HERE & THERE

**Eileen Kennedy**, dean of the school, was invited to be the keynote speaker this December at the USDA Economic Research Service Conference on "Recent Findings and Emerging Issues in Food and Nutrition Programs."

In September, Adjunct Professor **Venkatesh Iyengar** conducted a workshop on Quality Assurance in Food Safety and Human Nutrition Research for the Nutrition Society of Korea. He also presented a lecture on the "Role of Metrology in supporting Nutrition Education and Capacity Development" at the Asian Congress of Nutrition in Taipei, Taiwan. He also lectured at the 12th International Conference on Modern Trends in Activation Analysis, held in Hachioji, Japan.

Professor **Robert Russell** gave a presentation at the Institute of Medicine Food and Nutrition Board Workshop in Washington, D.C., on "Development of DRIs, 1994–2004: Lessons Learned and New Challenges." He also presented at the Grand Challenges in Global Health: Scientific Progress Meeting of the Gates Foundation in Cape Town, South Africa. The title of

his talk was "Human Beta-Carotene Conversion to Vitamin A from Plant Foods." He gave two talks at the 9th annual meeting of the Brazilian Society for Food and Nutrition in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

## FRIEDMAN FACULTY IN THE NEWS

*Reader's Digest* tapped **Jeffrey Blumberg** for an article on "The Vitamin Myth." "There have been many studies looking at supplements," he said, "but the most consistent evidence we've had over the past 30 years is that eating a healthy diet, low in salt and saturated fat, losing extra weight, exercising moderately, reducing stress and quitting smoking are our best guarantees against disease and premature death."

Professor **Sarah Booth** wrote an article for *Bottom Line Health* that explained some of the exciting findings about "Vitamin K's ability to help curb the development and/or progression of certain common medical ailments," many of them based on her research.

An editorial co-authored by Professor **Johanna Dwyer** for *the Journal of the National Cancer Institute* was quoted by Reuters in an article about vitamin D. "While vitamin D may well have multiple benefits beyond bone, health professionals and the public should not in a rush to judgment assume that vitamin D is a magic bullet and consume high amounts of vitamin D."

**Elizabeth Johnson**, an assistant professor, explained to *Prevention* magazine why eggs are good sources of lutein and zeaxanthin for eye health. Eggs don't contain as much lutein and zeaxanthin as dark green, leafy veggies, she said, but your body is better able to absorb the antioxidants in eggs.

**Hugh Joseph**, an assistant adjunct professor, made the case for buying local when it comes to Thanksgiving dinner. "It's a little more work, but people make a special trip to get their doughnuts; if they can do that, they can make a special trip to get their turkey," he told the *Boston Globe*.

In a letter to the editor published in the *New York Times*, Professor **Alice Lichtenstein** called attempts to curb junk food in schools a good idea, but cautioned that "focusing a disproportional amount of energy on this low-hanging fruit avoids tackling the larger problem ... As long as parents stock the house with mega-sized containers of less preferable food and drink options and companies use popular figures to advertise these products, our well-intended efforts in the schools are doomed to fail."

A recent study on zinc and health in older people by **Simin Nikbin Meydani** caught the attention of the *Los Angeles Times* and other news outlets. They reported on the yearlong study of nursing home residents age 65 and older, which found those with low levels of zinc in the bloodstream had twice the incidence of pneumonia and nearly 50 percent more antibiotic prescriptions over the year than those with normal zinc status.

The *New York Times* turned to Professor **Susan Roberts** and Associate Professor **Edward Saltzman** and for an article about overindulging on Thanksgiving. Roberts and Assistant Professor **Christina Economos** also contributed to a nytimes.com blog about health on

Halloween.

The *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* recently published three studies on consumption of fish/omega-3 fatty acids and cognitive function. Professor **Irwin Rosenberg's** accompanying editorial, "Rethinking Brain Food," noted there is growing evidence of such an association, but randomized clinical trials are needed to confirm the link. His editorial was referenced in a HealthDay News article published in the Washington Post and several other newspapers.

Professor **Allen Taylor** talked to the *Chicago Sun-Times* about the finding that eating lots of refined carbohydrates can lead to age-related macular degeneration (AMD). "We've opened up a completely new way of approaching the delay of progress of AMD," he said. "It forces us to think again about what we're putting into our bodies." He also spoke about AMD with *Women's World*.

## ALUMNI UPDATES

### Alumni career panel

Please join us for an alumni career panel on Thursday, January 24, at 5:15 p.m. in the Jaharis Center. "From Here to Career: The Necessary Steps and Missteps of Landing a Job" will feature a cross section of jobs in nutrition. More information is available at <http://nutrition.tufts.edu>. Interested in being on a Friedman alumni career panel? Contact Sean Devendorf at [sean.devendorf@tufts.edu](mailto:sean.devendorf@tufts.edu) or (617) 636-2949.

### Reunion

Mark your calendars for the All-Alumni Reunion on April 12-14, 2008. Reunion will feature the 2008 Alumni Association Awards, keynote speaker Clark Wolf, events that discuss critical issues in nutrition and the opportunity to re-connect with old friends and mentors. There will also be a reception just for Friedman graduates from the early 1990s. More information will be posted soon on <http://nutrition.tufts.edu>.

### The Spirit of Giving

As the holidays approach and 2007 draws to a close, consider giving to the Friedman School annual fund before December 31. Your generosity will provide needed support for health research, student financial aid, internships and other school priorities. To make a gift, go to <https://www.alumniconnections.com/donate/tufts> or call 1-866-351-5184. For more information on how your philanthropy can assist the school, contact the Advancement Office at 617-636-2940 or go to <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/giving>.

The deadline for the next issue of the *Dean's Letter for Tufts Nutrition* is Wednesday, January 16. Please send your submissions to Julie Flaherty at [julie.flaherty@tufts.edu](mailto:julie.flaherty@tufts.edu).