

THE DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS NUTRITION



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SECOND ANNUAL GRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

More than 100 graduate students from 19 universities attended the “**Future of Food and Nutrition: A Multi-Disciplinary Graduate Research Conference,**” which was hosted by the Friedman School on March 29. The conference, planned by a team of 20 Friedman students, provided an opportunity for students to practice presenting original research in a professional setting, collaborate and share feedback with other students, and network with future colleagues.

Graduate students from as far as Tulane University in New Orleans and McGill University in Quebec, Canada, attended.

The 27 presenters shared research on a wide range of topics, from the impacts of micro-credit on household food security in Bangladesh, to an examination of African traditional vegetables and farmer nutrition, to associations between vitamin K intake and glucose metabolism in adults. The day culminated with a challenging discussion about the effects of climate change on the future of food, agriculture and nutrition by three expert panelists: William Moomaw, Ph.D., director of the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy at the Fletcher School at Tufts; Norman Uphoff, Ph.D., of Cornell University; and Douglas Petersen, commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

Monika Sawhney of Tulane University received the award for most outstanding oral presentation for her talk on the relationships between health system efficiency and child health disparities in India. Friedman’s own **Flannery Campbell**, N08, received the prize for most outstanding poster presentation. Her research examined how accounting for geographic cost-of-living differences strengthens the relationship between poverty and food insecurity.

INAUGURAL STUDENT/ALUMNI CAREER NETWORKING TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ten current Friedman students and one prospective student visited alumni at work in Washington, D.C., on March 20 to learn about career opportunities in nutrition. Friedman

alumni at the participating organizations explained the day-to-day of their professions and how the Friedman School helped prepare them for their current jobs. The group visited the



International Food Information Council, the Council for Responsible Nutrition, Environmental Defense, the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Virilion Interactive Marketing, the Manoff Group and the USDA Office of the Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services. The day culminated in a reception at the Hotel Tabbard Inn. Thank you to all the alumni who helped make the day a huge success and especially the Alumni Association

Executive Council planning committee of **Andrew Shao**, N00; **Deepa Lakshmi Shanadi**, N02; and **Rachel Cheatham**, N07.

If you are interested in hosting the student group next year, or want to learn more about the event, please contact Sean Devendorf, the director of annual giving and alumni relations, at sean.devendorf@tufts.edu.

RESEARCH UPDATES

A team led by principal investigator **Martin Obin**, Ph.D., and co-investigator **Andrew Greenberg**, M.D., has been awarded a \$1 million grant from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Both are associate professors at the Friedman School and researchers in the Obesity and Metabolism Laboratory at the HNRCA. The four-year project, titled "Adipocyte Death and Obesity-induced Inflammation," will investigate mechanisms regulating immune cell responses to obesity-induced adipocyte death and how these responses contribute to inflammation and obesity complications. Additional key collaborators include Richard Van Etten, M.D., Ph.D., chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology at Tufts Medical Center, and other colleagues in France and Italy.

Amy Yee, Ph.D., a professor at the Friedman School and the School of Medicine, and **Teeru Bihani**, Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow, were awarded a grant from the Koman Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Their work will address the mechanisms that underlie invasive breast cancer. The grant provides \$180,000 over three years for the mentored training of Bihani in basic and clinical sciences. Last year, Yee received a two-year, \$150,000 grant from the American Institute of Cancer Research to develop the green tea compound EGCG for breast cancer chemotherapy. This grant received the highest score in the study section.

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Jennifer Hashley, director of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, was recognized as an "emerging environmental leader" by the Environmental Leadership Program (ELP). Hashley received a yearlong fellowship aimed at enhancing the capacity of the environmental movement. The ELP said she and the other fellows "represent the cutting edge of environmental thought, policy and action, and embody the increasingly diverse field

of environmental leadership.”



Alice Lichtenstein, D.Sc., the Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy, received the Mentor of Women award from the Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology (ATVB) Women's Leadership Committee of the American Heart Association. The award was presented at a luncheon on April 17 in Atlanta by the chair of the committee.

José M. Ordovas, Ph.D., a professor at the Friedman School and director of the Nutrition and Genomics Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA), was awarded an honorary degree in medicine from the Universidad de Córdoba in Spain in April. It is just the fourth time that the university has awarded an honorary degree in medicine, including one to Severo Ochoa, who shared the 1959 Nobel Prize in Medicine for his research on the synthesis of RNA.

FRIEDMAN FACULTY IN THE NEWS

Professor **Jeffrey Blumberg**, Ph.D., discussed the much-claimed health benefits of fruits like acai, mangosteen and pomegranate with the *Los Angeles Times*. “I hate that term ‘superfruit,’ like your [fruit] is somehow wearing the cape,” Blumberg said. “There’s no evidence that one type of fruit is better for you than any other variety. They’re all good.”

Professor **Jeanne Goldberg**, Ph.D., G59, N86, was quoted in an Associated Press article that looked at the trend of “all-you-can-eat seats” at baseball games, which include unlimited snacks like hot dogs, popcorn and soda. “Just what the world doesn’t need is another way to get as much food as they want whenever they want it,” she said.

The *U.S. News & World Report* website, usnews.com, looked into the benefits of traditional eating patterns, like the Mediterranean diet, and concluded any prudent meal-scape would be better than the current westernized diet. As Professor **Katherine Tucker** said, “A better diet, however you define it, almost always includes more fruits and vegetables, less processed meat, more whole grains, fish, nuts and low-fat dairy.”

Science News reported on a study by Assistant Professor **Dayong Wu**, Ph.D., that found mushrooms can jump start immune response in mouse cells. “Adding white button mushroom powder to incubating immune system cells from mice revved up the cells’ development and their response to a foreign protein,” the article said.

REUNION AND GERSHOFF SYMPOSIUM

Thank you to everyone who made the 2008 All-Alumni Reunion such a fun-filled success. To see photos and find out more about this year's festivities, go to <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/reunion>.

MAKE A GIFT TO THE FRIEDMAN SCHOOL!

Spring has finally arrived in Boston, and the warm weather is a reminder that the school's fund-raising year will end on June 30. Give to the Friedman School's annual fund to help us reach our goals. Through your generosity, you will provide needed support for student financial aid, research, student internships and other school priorities.

To make a gift securely online, go to <https://www.alumniconnections.com/donate/tufts>. 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, May 28. Please send your submissions to Julie Flaherty at julie.flaherty@tufts.edu.