

THE DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS NUTRITION



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15 MILLION USAID AWARD WILL LAUNCH NUTRITION PROGRAMS ON TWO CONTINENTS

The Friedman School will be leading new nutrition-focused programs in Asia and Africa, thanks to two recent grants totaling \$15 million from the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Faculty at the school will lead a consortium of U.S.-based institutions and partners in developing countries in implementing two concurrent five-year programs across the two continents. The programs will support the federal government's new Feed the Future initiative, which seeks to improve nutrition outcomes for children and women in very poor countries.

The programs will be developed and implemented jointly by U.S. and host country institutions and scientists.

Tufts faculty will take the lead in augmenting the education of faculty at host country universities and training institutions, and work to improve host government technical capacities to deal with nutrition, food security and health problems.

The programs will also support research on ways to enhance farmers' incomes, productivity and market participation, and to create policies to improve nutritional outcomes.

"These far-reaching activities have the potential to make a profound impact, not only in the target countries but in neighboring nations as well," says **Eileen Kennedy**, D.Sc., dean of the Friedman School.

Professor **Patrick Webb**, Ph.D., dean for academic affairs, will lead the activities in Asia, while Professor **William Masters**, Ph.D., will head activities in Africa. Webb and Masters will coordinate an innovative research-to-practice program that addresses nutritional, agricultural and food security needs.

The consortium of U.S. institutions that will work with Tufts includes the Harvard University School of Public Health, the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins, Purdue

University's Department of Agricultural Economics, Tuskegee University's College of Agricultural, Environmental and Natural Sciences and Development Alternatives Inc.

SLOW FOOD FOUNDER MAKES TIME FOR TUFTS

The president of Slow Food, an international grassroots organization that works to protect local food traditions and emphasize the connections between food, culture and the environment, made the Friedman School the first stop on his U.S. college speaking tour last month. Carlo Petrini, who founded the slow food movement in the 1980s, received a standing ovation for his impassioned defense of good food and his call to change the food system.

"We have deprived food of its original value," the Italian writer and provocateur said through a translator to the students and faculty who filled the Behrakis Auditorium. Today a food's worth, he said, is often judged by its price as a commodity. He pointed to several plant and animal breeds that have disappeared because they did not bring in the highest returns. "In Italy we have lost five breeds of milk cows. Why? Because they were not productive," he said. Yet one of those cows made very fine milk, and "the provolone was absolutely extraordinary," he said, lamenting the loss.

The loss of biodiversity has hurt the environment, he said, just as "150 years of chemicals have transformed our soil."

"All over the world we are losing our soil fertility," he said. "If you meet an old farmer, ask this person, 'How was the soil in the past?'" Inevitably, they reply it was better before, he said.

People, he said, have also lost their value. In a world of giant agribusinesses, people are no longer citizens but "consumers," eating (and often overeating) their way from one fast-food meal to another.

"We need to recover our time," he said. "We are not made to consume, but to be happy and enjoy the pleasures of the world."

EATING MORE WHOLE GRAINS LINKED TO LESS VISCERAL FAT

A new study suggests that people who consume several servings of whole grains per day while limiting their intake of refined grains appear to have less visceral body fat, which is thought to play a key role in triggering cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes. Researchers at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA) saw 10 percent less visceral fat in people who reported eating three or more servings of whole grains and less than one serving of refined grains per day.

The researchers examined diet questionnaires submitted by 2,834 men and women enrolled in the Framingham Heart Offspring and Third Generation study cohorts. The participants, ages 32 to 83, underwent multidetector computed tomography scans to determine their volumes of visceral fat, which surrounds the intra-abdominal organs, and subcutaneous fat, which is found just beneath the skin.

“Prior research suggests visceral fat is more closely tied to the development of metabolic syndrome, a cluster of risk factors including hypertension, unhealthy cholesterol levels and insulin resistance that can develop into cardiovascular disease or Type 2 diabetes,” says study co-author **Paul Jacques**, D.Sc., director of the Nutritional Epidemiology Program at the HNRCA and a professor at the Friedman School. When comparing visceral fat and subcutaneous fat to the kinds of grains people ate, “we saw a more striking association with visceral fat” in those people who ate fewer whole grains, he says, even after accounting for other lifestyle factors, such as fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity.

The correlation did not hold true, however, in people who ate three daily servings of whole grains as well as lots of refined grains. “Whole grain consumption did not appear to improve visceral adipose tissue volume if refined grain intake exceeded four or more servings per day,” says first author **Nicola McKeown**, Ph.D., a scientist with the Nutritional Epidemiology Program, who is also an assistant professor at the Friedman School. “This result implies that it is important to make substitutions in the diet, rather than simply adding whole grain foods. For example, choosing to cook with brown rice instead of white or making a sandwich with whole grain bread instead of white bread.”

The study was published online by *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS TO DEBUT IN JANUARY

The Friedman School has launched its first online graduate certificate programs, with classes scheduled to start in January.

Recognizing that nutrition, while a field of study unto itself, is also essential in many related fields and disciplines, the school has designed three certificate programs for people in mid-career positions who may already hold an advanced degree and have significant experience in their respective fields.

These mid-career professionals are seeking ways to leverage the kind of targeted knowledge that can be gained from certificate courses. The certificate programs are designed to meet the needs of persons who seek online learning experiences without disrupting their work/life balance. Additionally:

- All of the certificate courses are held to the same academic standards as the courses the Friedman School offers to its master's degree students.
- Candidates for the certificate programs must meet many of the same admissions standards and requirements as students admitted to the school's traditional graduate degree programs.
- Courses are taught by the Friedman School's core faculty and seasoned adjunct faculty.

The certificate programs are: Applied Positive Deviance (jointly conferred with United Nations University); Nutrition Science and Communications for Public Relations Professionals and Delivery Science in International Nutrition (also jointly conferred with

United Nations University).

For more information, visit: <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/certificates>.

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

The Massachusetts Health Council named the city of Somerville the “Healthiest City in Massachusetts” for its Shape Up Somerville program and its efforts in combating childhood obesity and promoting active living. Shape Up Somerville was introduced in 2003 by Associate Professor **Christina Economos**, Ph.D., holder of the New Balance Chair in Childhood Nutrition, who began tracking the effects of changing children’s environments on weight gain over time. After making changes such as introducing fresh produce into school breakfast and lunch programs and increasing physical activity and nutrition curriculum during school hours, Somerville saw the children in the study gain, on average, one pound less per year than children in control communities.

Adjunct Professor **Judy Ribaya-Mercado**, Sc.D., was among the honorees who received an Award of Excellence from the Philippine Development Foundation–USA for outstanding achievements in their fields and for significant contributions toward Philippine development in science, engineering and technology. She was recognized for achievements in nutrition and health research and nutrition intervention projects in the Philippines and other developing nations. The award was presented at a Philippine Development Forum and Gala, held in San Jose, Calif., on September 25. The president of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino III, who was returning to Manila after speaking at the U.N. General Assembly, was a special guest at the event.

Visiting Professor **Nevin Scrimshaw**, M.D., Ph.D., received the Premio JM Bengoe award at the recent Second World Congress of Public Health Nutrition, held in Oporto, Portugal.

Professor **Allen Taylor**, Ph.D., director of the Laboratory for Nutrition and Vision Research at the HNRCA, was elected vice president of the International Society for Eye Research.

RESEARCH UPDATES

Adjunct Assistant Professor **Julia Peterson**, N04, Ph.D., wrote an article on lignans and cardiovascular disease that was featured in *Nutrition Reviews*. Friedman School faculty members **Johanna Dwyer**, D.Sc., and **Paul Jacques**, Sc.D., were co-authors.

Dyan Mazurana, Ph.D., and the Feinstein International Center hosted an expert group meeting on customary law and practice in Karamoja, in Kampala, Uganda. The meeting was attended by scholars and other experts working with the people of Karamoja, and was designed to help produce a proposal for a three- to four-year study by a multi-disciplinary research team.

HERE & THERE

Adjunct Professor **Johanna Dwyer**, D.Sc., spoke on “Policy Making in Dietary Reference Intakes: Evidence Based or Eminence Based?” and on dietary guidelines at the International

Conference on Dietary Reference Intakes in Taipei, China, and Taichung, Taiwan, in September. She also spoke on nutrient profiling and was a participant at the ILSI Southeast Asia meeting of regulatory officials. In October, Dwyer represented the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements at the EURECCA meetings on harmonizing dietary standards in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Professor **Paul Jacques**, Sc.D., and Assistant Professor Nicola **McKeown**, Ph.D., gave presentations titled "Mediterranean-style Diet Patterns: Their Relation to Diet Quality and Health Outcomes" and "Nutrition and Chronic Disease: Advantages of a Diet Pattern vs. Single Nutrient Approach," respectively, at the American College of Nutrition annual meeting in New York.

Adjunct Professor **Paul Milbury**, Ph.D., stepped in to chair the American Chemical Society's Boston session on cardiovascular disease and diabetes as part of the ACS Division of Agriculture and Food Chemistry Symposia. He took the place of John Finley (LSU) who was drafted into a special session on food contamination and the Gulf oil spill. Milbury also gave an invited presentation on "Berry Intake Ameliorates Pro-inflammatory Factors That Increase Risk of Cardiovascular Disease." In September, Milbury traveled to the Noble Foundation in Ardmore, Okla., where he was asked to serve on the External Advisory Board for the NIH-funded Center of Excellence for Research on Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Alzheimer's Disease.

Professor **Beatrice Rogers**, Ph.D., was in Colombia in October to deliver two talks at the Fourth Forum on the Human Right to Food and Nutrition Security, organized by the Observatorio de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional, an activity headed by the National University. She spoke on evaluating food security programs at the forum in Bogota, and on hunger mapping and the relationship of poverty and malnutrition at the forum in Manizales.

Professor **Allen Taylor**, Ph.D., met with U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) over the summer and received a letter of support for the Science Training Encouraging Peace (STEP-GTP) program from the congressman. Taylor is recruiting the first participants for the program, which seeks to pair Israeli and Palestinian graduate students and clinicians to collaborate on advanced study in the fields of nutrition, genetic counseling, clinical biochemistry, ophthalmology, diabetology or health communication. Frank wrote, "The fact that you have on your student committee the heads of Ben-Gurion University and the Technion as well as Al-Quds is encouraging as a sign that cooperation between people on each side who are in fact dedicated to such a peace can go forward." STEP-GTP grants will be processed through the HNRCA.

Peter Walker, Ph.D., the Rosenberg Professor in Nutrition and Human Security, and **Antonio Donini**, adjunct instructor, gave keynote speeches at the 2010 Humanitarian Congress on the Theory and Practice of Humanitarian Action in Berlin, Germany, in October.

Professors **Paul Jacques**, Sc.D., and **James Tillotson**, Ph.D., and Adjunct Professor Johanna Dwyer, D.Sc., are members of the newly formed Nutrition and Scientific Advisory Committee for Bay State Milling Company. The company recently announced the creation of its Healthy Grain Initiative, which aims to provide healthy and affordable grain-based food

and food ingredients to consumers.

FRIEDMAN FACULTY IN THE NEWS

For an Associate Press article that ran in many news outlets, Professor **Roger Fielding**, Ph.D., discussed two British studies in which beetroot juice consumption seemed to improve athletic stamina. "Certain foods can help you maximize the benefits from exercise, not reduce the amount you're doing," he said. "If a very small improvement is valuable to you, it's possible something like beetroot juice could do that."

Gershoff Professor **Alice Lichtenstein**, D.Sc., is vice chair of an Institute of Medicine committee that issued a report with recommendations on front-of-package nutrition labeling. Instead of various icons and logos, the committee called for labeling that would highlight the unhealthy nutrients in the foods, such as saturated fat, trans fat and sodium. "What we're suggesting is that food products be labeled in a consistent way with information that will help the general public decrease their risk for chronic diseases, and this is the type of information that is unlikely to currently appear on the front of the package," the *New York Times* quoted her as saying. Several national news outlets reported on the story.

Prevention Magazine, in trying to answer the question, "Do we really need a multivitamin?" points to recent research suggesting that multivitamins are not sufficient replacements for nutrients acquired from foods. The article quotes Associate Professor **Miriam Nelson**, Ph.D., as saying, "The multivitamin as insurance policy is an old wives' tale, and we need to debunk it."

In a Q&A with the *Boston Globe*, Professor **Susan Roberts**, Ph.D., said that using a device in the gym that measures changes in body fat through biometric impedance is "little better than measuring weight change on a scale."

COMING RIGHT UP

November 8

Join us for a **Tufts health sciences reception at the American Public Health Association** conference in Denver, Colo., co-hosted by the Friedman School, the School of Medicine's Public Health and Professional Degree Program and the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. The event will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Colorado Convention Center. Please register [here](#).

November 9

Join Tufts Alumni Denver and the Friedman School for a **Food for Thought** event with Associate Professor **Parke Wilde**, Ph.D. Enjoy dinner at the Black Pearl Denver and a discussion on "Foodienomics: A Guide to Organic, Local and Conventional Food Policy." Wilde will discuss how food policies are really made, with emphasis on the organic and local food movements and features of the conventional food system.

During the discussion we also invite you to enjoy a delicious four course meal with wine pairings focusing on fresh, locally produced ingredients. Executive Chef **Kate Horton** will describe each dish and share what local ingredients she used and what seasonal ingredients you should be looking for to use in your own cooking. Register online by Thursday, November 4.

The deadline for the next issue of the *Dean's Letter for Tufts Nutrition* is Monday, November 22. Please send your submissions to Julie Flaherty at julie.flaherty@tufts.edu.