

THE DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS NUTRITION



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THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF JERRY STERNIN

The Friedman School lost a wonderful friend and colleague when **Jerry Sternin** passed away in December. “Jerry was beloved by the students and faculty for his commitment to teaching and mentoring and his passion for making a difference,” said Dean **Eileen Kennedy**. His work with his wife, Monique, on the Positive Deviance Initiative touched people around the world. Shortly before his death, he was interviewed by the *New York Times Magazine* for an article on the “Year in Ideas.” “The Sternins take an unorthodox approach to problem-solving known as positive deviance, or P.D., which builds on years of their health work in poor

countries in Southeast Asia... ‘Instead of going into a village and looking at the 70 percent of malnourished kids, P.D. flips it around,’ Jerry Sternin said ... ‘There are 30 percent who are not malnourished—same socioeconomic status, same risk, but they’re not in trouble. Why?’ ”

ON THE RADIO

The Nutrition Internet Radio Project recently presented Nutrition Talk, the new Internet radio program written and produced by students at the Friedman School. The first broadcast focuses on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and the growing controversy surrounding their use. Assistant Professor **Kathleen Merrigan**, Ph.D., and Associate Professor **Timothy Griffin**, Ph.D., discuss the current science and domestic policy of GMOs in the first half of the show. Then Professors **Beatrice Rogers**, Ph.D., and **Robert Russell**, M.D., talk about the ways GMOs are being used—or not used—internationally, and whether this technology can really help end hunger. The prerecorded broadcast is available by visiting <http://www.nutritioninternetradio.org>. Or if you have an iPod and use Apple’s iTunes service, you can search for “Friedman Nutrition” in the iTunes Store and download this and future episodes to your iPod or iPhone device. You can also find the program under the “Health: Fitness & Nutrition” category of the Podcast area of iTunes. All downloads are free.

TOPS IN AG RESEARCH

A new survey of universities around the world puts Tufts at the top of the list for agricultural research that has impact. See <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=404872§ioncode=26>.

TWO BOOKS FROM THE FEINSTEIN INTERNATIONAL CENTER

After the Taliban: Life and Security in Rural Afghanistan (Rowman & Littlefield) by Neamatollah Nojumi, Associate Professor **Dyan Mazurana** and Instructor **Elizabeth Stites**, argues for understanding the gap between international and local perspectives of security. It highlights how stable livelihoods, human and women's rights, just governance, civil society development, security sector development and reform, and the establishment of a credible judiciary accessible to all are critical to Afghanistan's future. The authors help us better understand how enhancing the human security of Afghans sets the framework for reconstructing peace, dignity and hope.

Emergency Food Security Interventions, a publication by Associate Professor **Daniel Maxwell**, Ph.D., Instructor **Kate Sadler**, Amanda Sim, Mercy Mutonyi, Rebecca Egan and Mackinnon Webster, is now available from the Humanitarian Practice Network. This Good Practice Review explores programming practices in emergency food security. It provides a concise overview of conceptual issues and analytical and planning approaches, together with state-of-the-art programming practices in interventions designed to protect the food security of groups affected by disaster or crisis. Along with a brief description of the intervention, its application, management and monitoring, each chapter includes references to the best topic-specific overviews, tools and case studies currently available.

HERE & THERE

Adjunct Professor **Venkatesh Iyengar** was part of the team that organized an International Conference on Metrology of Environment, Food and Nutritional Measurements (MEFNM) in Budapest, Hungary. As chair of the IMEKO Technical Committee on Food and Nutritional Metrology, Venkatesh delivered an introductory lecture on "Food and Nutritional Measurements: Capacity Developmental Needs." He was also invited by the Nutrition Society of India to present a lecture on "Measuring Nutrients and Toxicants: Role of Food and Nutritional Metrology" at the society's annual meeting in Chennai, India. In Mysore, India, he conducted a training course on "Quality Assurance in Food Safety and Human Nutrition" at the Central Food Technological Research Institute in which 15 college teachers and professors participated.

At the American Heart Association meeting in New Orleans, Professor **Alice Lichtenstein**, D.Sc., presented a talk titled "Dietary Effects on Insulin Resistance" in the session titled "Obesity, Insulin Resistance and Diabetes Update." She also chaired the session titled "Elizabeth Barrett-Connor Research Award for Young Investigators in Training Competition."

Associate Professor **Joel Mason**, M.D., took part as an invited expert in a European Food Safety Authority meeting to consider whether mandatory folic acid fortification should be instituted for the entire European Union. The meeting, which was held in Sweden, was titled "Folic Acid: An Update on Scientific Developments."

Professor **Bea Rogers**, PhD., conducted a workshop in December for the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare on the application of small area estimation to 'hunger mapping,' or the estimation of national malnutrition prevalence at geographically disaggregated levels. The workshop was conducted jointly with James Wirth, who was a research associate at the

Friedman School for two years before joining the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition in Geneva. Attending the weeklong training were representatives of the institute, as well as the government departments of Planning, Statistics and Profamilia, a family welfare agency. The workshop was based on previous work of Rogers, James Wirth and **Kathy Macías**, N01,F02, with faculty members **Parke Wilde**, Ph.D., and **Patrick Webb**, Ph.D., using the same statistical approach to estimating malnutrition prevalence in three other Latin American countries.

RESEARCH UPDATES

John Burns, a Feinstein International Center researcher, has received a \$924,000 grant from CARE/USAID to conduct a three-year longitudinal study on the impact of NGO market-based and microfinance interventions. The research will be done in three highland areas of Ethiopia. It will seek to answer whether combinations of market-led and microfinance interventions lead to income and asset transfers over time, with associated graduation of poor rural households from the government safety net program.

A grant was awarded to Associate Professor **Guangwen Tang**, Ph.D., by the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture in Basel, Switzerland, to study the "Effect of Fat Intake on Vitamin A Equivalency of Golden Rice."

FRIEDMAN FACULTY IN THE NEWS

An article in *U.S. News & World Report* that looked at the nationwide weight gain and its effects on the health-care system cited Tufts' Shape Up Somerville program. "If we can start to shift our systems, it will go a lot farther than trying to reach 300 million people one-on-one," said Assistant Professor **Christina Economos**, Ph.D.

Dean **Eileen Kennedy**, D.Sc., explained to Reuters why tough economic times could fuel the obesity epidemic. "The reality is that when you are income constrained, the first area you try to address is having enough calories in your diet," she said. "And cheap sources of calories tend to be high in total fats and sugars." Ideally, Professor **Alice Lichtenstein**, D.Sc., told the *New York Times*, Americans would save money and maximize nutrition by dining out less. "It would be nice if they decided it was better for their budget to start preparing food at home more often," she said.

An editorial by Associate Professor **Miriam Nelson**, Ph.D., N85, N87, and Adjunct Assistant Professor Sara Folta discussing the current science on the benefits of walking, which appeared in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, was quoted in a LAtimes.com blog. "The key now is to figure out how to get more Americans walking," they wrote. "The most widely accepted mode of physical activity is walking, but many factors have converged to make it difficult to walk; these include the way we commute and work and the way our communities are built."

Professor **Susan Roberts'** new book, *The Instinct Diet*, was endorsed by *New York Times* health columnist Jane Brody as the most comprehensive of the year's best diet books. The *Boston Globe* also featured Roberts' book in an article on the shift away from relying on willpower for weight loss. "If you understand what pushes your buttons, it gets easier to eat right and lose weight," Roberts said.

Assistant Professor **Dayong Wu**, Ph.D., talked to *Cooking Light* magazine for a story about nutrition and immune function. He said it's hard to attribute specific immunity-boosting benefits to any one nutrient because of inconclusive research. "Many studies have been done in nutrition and immune function, involving numerous nutrients—and [they] come out with different, often contradicting results," he said. But, as Professor **Simin Meydani**, D.V.M., Ph.D., told *Real Simple* magazine, eating a low-fat diet with enough protein, and shedding extra pounds, have been proven to help immunity.

COMING RIGHT UP

On Thursday, February 5, the Alumni Association will host a career panel focusing on "Managing Your Career: Tips on Interviewing, Salary Negotiation and Promotions." Panelists will include **Tom Hughes**, Ph.D., N87, A10P, the chief executive at Zafgen, Inc., **Melinda Downie-Maryniuk**, G79, the director of clinical education programs at the Joslin Diabetes Center, and **Tessa W. Cooper**, N83, Sr. Vice President, Human Resources, Indevus Pharmaceuticals.

Mark your calendars for the 7th Annual Friedman School All-Alumni Reunion April 4–6. The reunion committee has planned a fantastic weekend that will feature the 2009 Alumni Association Awards, a group service project at the Greater Boston Food Bank, discussions of critical issues in nutrition and the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and mentors. The keynote speaker will be Lorelei DiSogra, vice president of nutrition and health for the United Fresh Produce Association. There will also be a special one-hour reception for Friedman School graduates from the last five years (2003 to 2008) and an all-alumni cocktail party at Vlora Restaurant in Boston. More information is posted at <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/reunion>. Questions? Please email sean.devendorf@tufts.edu.

The deadline for the next issue of the *Dean's Letter for Tufts Nutrition* is Wednesday, February 18, 2009. Please send your submissions to Julie Flaherty at julie.flaherty@tufts.edu.