Greetings! colleagues, alumni, and friends.

It has been two years since we last sent out our newsletter, What's Happening. I am delighted to share many exciting accomplishments and developments in the Department.

As you will see in this issue, the Department's scholarly productivity continues to rise in all of its instructional, research, and outreach programs, as assessed by publications, grants, lectures, media presentations, professional and public service, and leadership roles of faculty in professional organizations. Our current undergraduate enrollment has risen to 153, which is record high, representing a 260% increase over that of 2002-03. Along with the marked increase in NUSC majors, there have been drastic increases in class enrollments including NUSC 165 and student credit hours generated by faculty. During the 2005-06 year, our graduate programs enrolled a total of 49 students (14 M.S. and 35 Ph.D.) and 5 M.S. and 7 Ph.D. degrees were conferred. The continued success of the graduate program is attributable to faculty’s scholarly productivity and commitment to research and graduate education and the high quality of students.

Teaching programs within the Department continue to evolve to address the rising enrollment and student demand, and to develop new curricula and innovative teaching methods. The Department offers two undergraduate tracks, Dietetics and Nutritional Sciences (http://www.canr.uconn.edu/nusci/ugprog.html). At the same time, faculty is making significant efforts to enhance student-centered learning and critical thinking skills and to foster experiential learning by involving students in outreach and community programs. Faculty has been very successful in securing extramural funding to develop innovative teaching methods, support research, and to develop and administer outreach/extension programs. The 2005-06 income from extramural funding secured by faculty was record high with the total annualized income of over $4.0 million. This exceeded the 2004-05 record by $1.7 million. The increase was due partly to the two major grants from NIH for the Center for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos (Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, PI) and NSF for the Science and Technology Reaching Out to New Generations in Connecticut (STRONG CT) (Hedley Freake, PI), which have been highlighted in this issue. In the same year, faculty published 58 full-length articles in
From the Department Head

refereed journals and presented 56 papers at national and international conferences. Faculty served as members of editorial boards and organizers of national conferences, and on state, regional, and federal committees and panels, which reflects well our faculty’s scholarly reputation.

The Department continues to provide outstanding outreach programming and supports a broad range of research-based outreach programs reaching infants, toddlers, children, youth, and senior citizens, and those with limited resources in the State and beyond, as supported by USDA, NIH, and state agencies. One important aspect of the Department’s outreach/extension programs is that the programs are well integrated with teaching and research. The outreach and extension programs involve both undergraduate and graduate students with community participants and have not only served the people well, but also led to the publication of excellent research-based articles in refereed journals.

Lastly, there have been some changes in our faculty. Dr. Rich Bruno joined us in August 2005, as featured under Faculty Spotlight in this issue. Dr. Christine Greene joined us in the fall 2006 as assistant professor in residence and teaches NUSC 160, 165, and 166. Dr. Donna Chapman has been appointed as assistant professor in residence to work with CEHDL and teach NUSC 200. Dr. Carol Lammi-Keefe retired from UConn in August 2006, and accepted a position of Professor and Head, Division of Human Nutrition & Food, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. We wish her well in her new position.

Thank you for your support, hard work, and commitment to excellence in fulfilling all areas of our mission.

Wish you all happy holidays!

NUSC Faculty Secure Major Grants

The Connecticut Center of Excellence for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos

The NIH Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities has awarded Dr. Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, from the University of Connecticut Department of Nutritional Sciences, an $8.25 million five-year grant to establish and direct The Connecticut Center of Excellence for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos (CEHDL). The Center is structured as a consortium led by The University of Connecticut in close partnership with The Hispanic Health Council (Co-PI: Grace Damio), and Hartford Hospital (Co-PI Laurine Bow). CEHDL will have four cores and will oversee a type 2 diabetes randomized community trial. The Administrative Core will be based at UConn’s Department of Nutritional Sciences with the goal of providing overall coordination and direction to CEHDL. The Center director will be advised by an internal and an external advisory board and will work in strong partnership with CEHDL’s steering committee, deputy director, and assistant director. The Research Core will be responsible for promoting scientific exchanges in the area of health disparities through a seminar series, an annual conference, interactive workshops, and an annual mini-grant competition. The Research Education & Training Core will concentrate on the recruitment, retention, and formation of underrepresented minorities in the area of health disparities. This will be achieved through high school recruitment, undergraduate and graduate curriculum development, cross-cultural community field experiences, summer stipends, and research assistantships. The Community Connections Core will be based at The Hispanic Health Council and will be responsible for developing and testing innovative training, applied research, and outreach partnerships with minority communities. In addition to the four cores, CEHDL will also conduct a randomized community longitudinal trial at Hartford Hospital examining the impact of home based peer counseling on disease management and health outcomes among inner-city Latinas with type 2 diabetes (n=208). In addition to its scientific contribution toward reducing health disparities, this study will serve as a prime mechanism for CEHDL’s training and outreach activities.

Continued on page 3, STRONG-CT
The National Science Foundation has recently funded a dynamic collaboration between the University of Connecticut and three neighboring community colleges, Manchester Community College (MCC), Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) and Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) ---The Science and Technology Reaching Out to A New Generation in Connecticut STRONG-CT alliance. The new initiative, funded at 1.53 million dollars over five years, aims to increase enrollment, retention and graduation of first generation and historically underrepresented student populations in life science disciplines.

First generation students, many of whom are African American and Latino/a, often choose to go to community college as the primary way of accessing higher education. This proposal aims to enhance the number of first generation and historically underrepresented students taking science courses at these community colleges, and then encourage their transfer to complete bachelor’s degrees in the life sciences at UConn. This will expand the historically limited access of these students to higher education opportunities and help diversify the student body at UConn.

Pooling resources across institutions, STRONG-CT will offer an academic development and leadership program focusing on: (1) rigorous individual and group academic support for the core science and math courses, (2) mentoring relationships in the sciences through undergraduate research opportunity initiatives, (3) leadership and identity enhancement activities to overcome stereotypes and self-esteem challenges, and (4) overall development of the professional identity of being a scientist through mentoring, research, and internships experiences. The program will be guided by a leadership team of Co-PI’s (Hedley Freake and Damon Williams (UConn), Eleanor Weseloh (MCC), Melissa Philion (QVCC) and Diba Khan-Bureau (TRCC)) and an executive oversight committee of senior officers drawn from all four schools and around the state.

New Graduate Students

Al-Sarraj, Taif  PhD  Fernandez
Calle, Mariana  MS  Fernandez
Checchio, Tina  PhD  Clark
Dessalines, Michael  MS  Perez-Escamilla
Dugan, Christine  PhD  Bruno
Gaffney, Erin  PhD  Freake
Liang, Claudia  MS  Davis
Moura, Jose Oyama  PhD  Fernandez
Putnik, Predrag  PhD  Perez-Escamilla
Ratliff, Joseph  MS  Fernandez
Sankavaram, Kavitha  PhD  Freake
Smith, Molly  PhD  Perez-Escamilla
Soopan, Ranganaden  MS  Freke
Wei, Stephanie  MS  Ferris
Wetzl, Katherine  MS  Perez-Escamilla
Yeung, Steven  MS  Bruno

Graduate Students Completed

Master's Defenses
Anju Balakrishnan  Dec. 2006
Nora Decher  Dec. 2006
Katie Jeffrey  May 2006
Elizabeth McArthur  Aug. 2006
Lisa Zola  Aug. 2006

PhD Prospectus Defenses
Sudeep Shrestha  Feb. 2006
Amrita Dutta  Feb. 2006
Melissa Keplinger  Feb. 2006
Amber Courville  Mar. 2006
Gisella Mutungi  July 2006
Suzie Goodell  Sept. 2006
Moises Torres Gonzales  Sept. 2006

PhD Dissertation Defenses
Dimple Aggarwal  May 2006
Charlotte DeMare  May 2006
Courtney Gaine  Aug. 2005
Christine Greene  May 2006
Michelle Judge  May 2006
HyeWon Kang  Aug. 2006
Richard Wood  May 2006
Grants Awarded

Richard Bruno
- Large Faculty Grant Program, Dietary g-Tocopherol In the Prevention of Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis, 05/2005 - 06/2006, $24,000
- UConn Summer Undergraduate Research Fund (SURF), Green Tea Extract In The Prevention of Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease, Summer 2006, $3,500; Undergraduate Awardee: Dana DiNatale

Maria Luz Fernandez
- A soluble fiber and plant sterol-containing cookie for lowering cholesterol: A randomized, double blind, placebo-controlled study, 05/2005 - 04/2006, $63,000
- Raisin effects on biomarkers of coronary heart disease in elderly men and women, 04/2006 - 03/2007, $74,565
- Potential of eggs in enhancing the cardioprotective effects of carbohydrate restricted diets in weight loss interventions, 07/2006 - 12/2007, $112,862

Ann Ferris
- USDA/CTDSS Food Stamp Nutrition Education grant, has received pre-award coding (6 months) pending receipt of final MOA from CTDSS, 10/06-9/07 $781,266
- Food Stamp Connections: Ann Ferris PI, Susan Beeman, Michelle Pierce, Co-PI's $259,964
- Food Stamp Administration: Susan Beeman PI, $87,752
- 4H Summer Nutrition Education: Umekia Taylor, PI, $37,205
- Hispanic Health Council, Rafael Perez-Escamilla, PI, $332,778
- Food Security, Linda Drake, PI, $63,567

Hedley Freake

Sung Koo
- NIH National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Hypocholesterolemic action of green tea extracts; 04/2004 - 03/2006

Mary McGrane
- USDA National Research Initiative Competitive Grant, Vitamin A Regulation of Gene Expression in Liver: From a Single Gene to a Multi-Gene Profile, 09/01/03 - 08/31/07

Rafael Pérez-Escamilla
- Breastfeeding Education and Support Trial for Obese Women (BESTOW) Donaghue Foundation, 01/2006 - 01/2009, $239,695
- Latino Health Disparities NIH EXPORT Center NIH-NCMHD 10/2005 - 09/2010, $8.2 million

Nancy Rodriguez
- National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Role of beef-based diet in modulating skeletal muscle protein turnover and intracellular signaling events during acute calorie deprivation, 2006 - 2008, $60,000
- Donaghue Nutrition Research Competition, Leucine as a bioactive nutrient: A pilot study, 2006 - 2007, $32,000

Ellen Shanley & Colleen Thompson
- USDA - Innovative food safety education for low literacy food service employees using enhanced and interactive distance education 10/06 – 09/09 $530,117
- UConn Dental School funded by the Connecticut Health Foundation titled A Pilot Study to Promote Maternal and Infant Oral Health; Shanley & Thompson’s portion is $60,000

Awards

Richard Bruno
- Alumnus In the Spotlight, Department of Human Nutrition, The Ohio State University, 2005

Steven Davis
- Dannon Nutrition Leadership Institute Award, 2005

Maria Luz Fernandez
- UCANRRA Teaching Award, 2005-2006
- Provost Award in Research, 2006

Hedley Freake
- UConn Vice-Provost for Multicultural and International Affairs Diversity Award, Spring 2006

Rafael Pérez-Escamilla
- UConn Outreach Vice Provost Outstanding Engaged Scholar Award, 2006
- UConn Provost Diversity Award, Storrs, Spring 2006
- UConn "million dollar club" Research & Graduate School Vice-Provost grantsmanship recognition, 2005
- UConn’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Excellence in Research Award, 2004

Nancy Rodriguez
- University of Connecticut Teaching Fellow, 2005
- American Dietetics Outstanding Dietetics Educator Award, Didactic Program in Dietetics Category, 2004
- Nominated for University of Connecticut Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award, 2005 & 2003
Alumni News

• **Bridget Aidam**, PhD 2004 is currently Chief Nutritionist with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Silver Spring, MD. Her job entails lots of overseas travel. She has recently been working with the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health and The Role of Soy in ADRA Ghana’s USAID Funded Integrated Food Security Project and presented at the WISHH Food Aid Conference and Workshop February 16, 2006 in Ghana.

• **Jigna Dharod**, PhD 2005 is Research Associate II: PUBLIC HEALTH at the University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service Institute for Public Sector Innovation in Augusta, ME. She works for the Maine Physical Activity and Nutrition program, funded by CDC and the Maine Nutrition Network, Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program funded by USDA.

• **Nurgül Fitzgerald**, PhD (2004), RD is Assistant Extension Specialist in Health Promotion and Behavior at Rutgers’ Family & Consumer Science Department in New Brunswick, NJ. Nurgül launched a needs assessment study about the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and barriers toward achieving healthy lifestyles. The project involves Rutgers students in various phases of the study.

• **Lauren A. Haldeman**, PhD 2001 is Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her research is focused on healthy eating among food insecure Latino/Hispanic families as well as disparities in health care. Her husband Tony Weaver is completing his PhD this fall in Higher Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at UNCG.

• **Kristin Herron** got married to Mickey on August 19 in Park City, Utah. The wedding was beautiful and so was the bride. She continues being a Senior Scientist at Kraft Foods in Chicago.

• **HyeWon Kang** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Harvard–MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology, Boston, MA.

• **Alex Kojo Anderson**, PhD, MPH 2005 is now an Asst Prof in the Department of Food and Nutrition at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. He is PI for the Infant Feeding & Body Composition Research Lab. He is currently working on a study focusing on the effects of infant feeding on body composition of infants and their mothers. The study will research both mothers who are breastfeeding and those who are formula feeding. Alex and his wife Mildred spent time visiting with their families in Ghana this summer.

• **Ingrid Lofgren** was offered and accepted a tenure-track faculty position at University of Rhode Island. She got a very good start-up packet!!

• **Stefania Paciello**, MS 2003 is Corporate Manager of Quality Assurance of Celebration Foods/Ice Cream Corp. in Rocky Hill, CT. Stefania manages all co-packers, vendors, customers (i.e. COSTCO, Walmart, etc.), FDA, Public Health Department, and Military audits assuring that Carvel’s facilities adhere to the necessary QA standards. She also works with outside labs with the microbiological analyses. She also has supervisory responsibilities with the manufacturing facilities located in CA, MD and MA.

• **Tripu Ramjiganesh** had a second daughter at the beginning of August.

• **Kelly Scribner** has a position as an Endocrinology Research Fellow at the Harvard Children’s Hospital, Boston, MA.

• **Dong-Ju Shin** is a Postdoctoral Scholar with Tim Osborne, Professor and Chairman, Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at the University of California, Irvine.

• **Sonia Vega-Lopez** joined the Hispanic Council on September 1. She is the coordinator for the Diabetics Peer Counsel Intervention. She is now living in West Hartford.

• **Kristy West** has moved to NC and is now a medical writer for PPD, Inc. a leading global contract research organization providing discovery development.

In Other News

• Connie Cantor has moved to the Center for Public Health and Health Policy and serves as Publicity and Marketing Manager at the Center. Her 15-years’ valuable contribution to the Department is gratefully acknowledged by faculty, staff and graduate students. Her current address: Connie Cox Cantor (Ccantor@uchc.edu), Publicity/Marketing Manager, Center for Public Health and Health Policy, 99 Ash Street, 2nd Floor, MC 7160, East Hartford, CT 06108; 860-282-8538; fax: 860-282-8505.

• Donna Chapman, Ph.D., R.D. recently accepted the position of Associate Editor for the Journal of Human Lactation.

• Camilla Crossgrove is currently in the process of having her position audited for upgrade from Secretary I to Secretary II, with the eventual goal of upgrading to Administrative Assistant within 12-18 months.

• Judie Baker has joined the staff as Clerk Typist in the main office after the resignation of Julie MacDonald to accept a position at the Connecticut Small Business Development Center (Vernon Office). Judie comes to the Department from Parking Services. We welcome her to the Department.

• Ellen Shanley has been elected to the position of Speaker-elect of the American Dietetic Association (ADA). ADA is a 65,000 member association and is the nation’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. She began this position June 1, 2006 and will become Speaker June 1, 2007. In addition she serves as a member of the Executive Committee on the Board of Directors.
New Faces at NUSC

• Cheryl Brown is the UConn Coordinator for the STRONG-CT, Science and Technology Reaching Out to New Generations in Connecticut Program, described on page 3 of this newsletter. She comes to UConn with a strong background in advising and student support and is now providing these services to the UConn STRONG-CT students. In addition, she is responsible for student recruitment, coordination with the participating community colleges and overall grant management.

• Christine M Greene, PhD, is currently working within the department as an Assistant Professor in Residence. She is teaching one section of NUSC 165 and the only section of NUSC 166. In the Spring semester, she will add the team taught NUSC 160 to her responsibilities.

• Kevin Noonan, BFA, is a Graphic Artist with CEHDL & NUSC. Some of his responsibilities include development and maintenance of websites, production of brochures, posters, fact sheets, and seminar announcements as well as other needs of the project and the department.

• Sheila Taylor, BA, is Program Assistant with CEHDL, working with Rafael Perez-Escamilla and Lisa Phillips in all aspects of administrating the Center’s activities including scheduling of meetings and seminars, assisting with conference planning, ordering supplies, as well as coordination of the High School Summer Research Apprenticeship Program (HSSRAP).

Recent Publications

Book Chapters

Articles Submitted

Articles Published
• Anderson AK, Damio G, Chapman DJ, Pérez-Escamilla R,
• Poehlitz PM, Pierce MB, and Ferris, AM. Delivering nutrition education in a service-learning course. Accepted by J Nutr Edu Behav. (in press)
• Greene CM & Fernandez ML. 2006 The role of nutrition in the prevention of cardiovascular disease in women APJCN (in press)
• Greene CM, Waters D, Clark RM, Contois JH & Fernandez ML. 2006 Plasma LDL and HDL characteristics and carotenoid content are positively influenced by egg consumption in an elderly population. Nutr. Met 3:6
• Aggarwal D, West KL, Zern TL, Shrestha S, Vergara-Jimenez M & Fernandez ML. 2005. JTT-130, a microsomal transfer protein inhibitor lowers plasma triglycerides and LDL cholesterol concentrations without increasing hepatic triglycerides in the guinea pig. BMC Card. Dis. 5:30
• Herron KL, McGrane MM, Lofgren IE, Waters D, Clark RM, Ordovas JM & Fernandez ML. 2006. ABCG5 polymorphism

Continued on page 8, Publications
Publications

contributes to the individual response to dietary cholesterol and to carotenoids present in eggs. JNUTR 136: 1161-1165


- Davis SR, Quinlinvan EP, Shelnutt KP, Ghandour H, Capdevila A, Coats BS, Wagner C, Selhub J, Bailey LB, Stacpoole PW, Gregory JF (2005) Homocysteine synthesis is elevated but total remethylation is unchanged by the methyltenetetrahydrofolate...
Outreach Programs Updates

Rafael Pérez-Escamilla is the recipient of the first “Outstanding Engaged Scholar Award” ever awarded by the University of Connecticut. This award, established by the Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach recognizes Dr. Pérez-Escamilla’s outstanding contributions in building community nutrition and public health research and outreach capacity in Connecticut, Latin America and West Africa. In May, Dr. Pérez-Escamilla was a guest of the government of Brazil at the press conference announcing the release by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) of the national household food insecurity data collected from 120,000 households. This event was the culmination of three years of work of adaptation, validation and application of the USDA Household Food Security Module in Brazil. Drs. Pérez-Escamilla and Ana Maria Segall-Correa, from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP), have been the leaders in this project since it’s inception in the spring of 2003. The Connecticut Center of Excellence for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos (www.cehdl.uconn.edu), directed by Dr. Pérez-Escamilla, organized the conference “Type 2 Diabetes and Health Disparities in Connecticut: From Research to Action” on June 30 at UConn. Dr. Ana Lourdes Gómez was the conference chair. This conference brought together faculty, students, health care providers, community groups and state agencies to improve the state’s ability to deal with this epidemic. Dr. Pérez-Escamilla was invited to deliver the keynote address “Public Nutrition Research in Latin America” at the Human Nutrition International Colloquium organized by the University of Antioquia and The Centro de Investigación en Alimentación y Nutrición (CIAN), Medellín, Colombia, August 10-11. 2006 marks the eighth anniversary of our partnership with the Department of Nutrition and Food Science at the University of Ghana-Legon under the leadership of Drs. Anna Lartey and Pérez-Escamilla. This summer four of Dr. Pérez-Escamilla’s students worked on projects in Ghana. Ghanaian graduate students Gloria Otoo and Mawunyo Timpo, and undergraduate honors student Kristine Folkerts conducted research projects. Doctoral student Amber Hromi-Fiedler visited refugee camps in Ghana with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. She will use this experience to enrich the “Nutrition during Humanitarian Emergencies” online course that she is teaching. All four students also participated in the Africa Nutrition Epidemiology Conference, University of Ghana–Legon, August 15-18. Rafael Pérez-Escamilla attended the NCI/NIH Cancer Health Disparities Summit and the NIH EXPORT Centers directors meeting, Bethesda, Maryland, July 17-18.

Linda Drake, State EFNEP Director, is Chair of the CT Food Policy Council. In May, the CFPC sponsored a conference, Home Plate – Putting Local Food on the Menu, to increase the use of local food in institutions. Over 100 chefs, school and institutional food service staff, farmers, dietitians, government and industry representatives, food distributors and educators attended and enjoyed presentations including the keynote by John Turenne, formerly executive chef at Yale University, and Senator Don Williams, a leader in supporting legislation for increasing agricultural viability as well as healthy food options in schools. The luncheon featuring local foods was a bit hit, as were the tours of the UCONN Dairy Bar and the Agro-Husky Eco Garden.

In June, the CFPC hosted representatives from northeastern state legislatures as they learned about food policy councils and how they can help address issues and concerns in the food system. Participants went on several tours of preserved farmland, dairy farms – including “The Farmers’ Cow” Connecticut milk, Mansfield public schools to see farm-to-school programs in action, and Hartford’s downtown farmers’ market that helps improve access to local foods in the inner city.

Drake has been busy on several national committees including the EFNEP Task Force and the Obesity and Public Policy Education committee of CSREES/USDA. She presented a poster, “Community Food Security in Connecticut – a town-by-town evaluation,” at the Society for Nutrition Education annual conference in San Francisco in July, 2006. The publication is available at the website of the CT Food Policy Council: www.foodpc.state.ct.us – click on “publications” at the bottom of the home page. This document has sparked interest in several communities to do something to improve food security in their towns.

Continued on page 11, Outreach
Publications


• Patalay M, Lofgren IE, Freake HC, Koo SI and Fernandez ML. The lowering of plasma lipids following a weight reduction program is related to increased expression of the LDL receptor and lipoprotein lipase. J Nutr135, 735-739, 2005.


• Scribner KB, Odom DP and McGrane MM. Nuclear receptor binding to the retinoic acid response elements of the phosophoenolpyruvate carboxykinase gene in vivo. J Nutr Biochem 2006; May 17 [Epub ahead of print].

• Herron K, McGrane MM, Odom DP, Clark RM Fernandez ML. ABCG5 polymorphism contributes to the individual response to dietary cholesterol and to carotenoids present in eggs. J. Nutr 2006; 136:1161-5.


Presentations

• Chapman DJ, Pérez-Escamilla R. Wide variation in breastfeeding practices among Latina subgroups. Poster presentation at International Society for Research on Human Milk and Lactation. Sept, 2006, Niagra-on-the Lake, Canada


• Beeman SJ. (2006) Panel: Different Levels of Audits: State, FNS Regional , EFNEP/FSNE Regional conference, Wilmington, Delaware,

Conference Proceedings

Dr. Robert Gordon Jensen Memorial Symposium

Dr. Robert Gordon Jensen passed away on July 9th 2006. On October 25th, a memorial symposium was held in his honor to remember his life and his legacy.

In April 1956, Dr. Robert Gordon Jensen and his family came to Storrs when he accepted an assistant professorship in Dairy Manufacturing in the Department of Animal Industries at the University of Connecticut.

Fourteen years later in July 1970, he played an important role in the creation of the Department of Nutritional Sciences, which he ultimately joined. As a member of this new department, Dr. Jensen was instrumental in obtaining funds to build a Lipid Lab.

When Dr. Jensen retired in January of 1991, he had served as the major advisor of thirty graduate students. Twenty one received MS and nine PhD degrees. All received financial support. He considered these students to be his most important legacy. He took great pride in their academic and professional accomplishments. Likewise, these students have not forgotten the guidance, inspiration and dedication Dr. Jensen shared with them. To honor Dr. Jensen, his career and his life, three of these students made presentations as part of the symposium.

Dr. Robert Pitas, M.S. University of Connecticut 1974, is the Senior Investigator at the Gladstone Institute of Cardiovascular at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) as well as a Professor of Pathology at UCSF.

Dr. Roger Newton, M.S University of Connecticut 1974, is the Senior Vice President of Pfizer Global Research and Development and Director, Esperion Therapeutics, a Division of Pfizer Global Research and Development.

Dr. Tom Brenna, B.S University of Connecticut 1980, is a Professor in the Division of Nutritional Sciences and a member of the Graduate Fields of Chemistry and Chemical Biology and of Geological Sciences at Cornell.
Faculty Spotlight

Although he’s no longer a new face in the department, Richard S. Bruno, Ph.D., R.D. joined the faculty in Fall 2005 as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Bruno earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Delaware. Subsequently, he earned his doctorate from The Ohio State University under the guidance of Dr. Tammy Bray. During this period, he also completed a dietetic internship to become a registered dietitian.

Dr. Bruno’s doctoral work was entitled The Role Of Oxidative Stress And Vitamin C On Vitamin E Utilization In Humans. By conducting a series of studies in humans, he determined that vitamin E metabolism was substantially altered by cigarette smoking such that smokers need to consume “a little extra” vitamin E on a daily basis to compensate for the increased metabolic burden smoking puts on the body (of course, Dr. Bruno recommends that they just quit smoking). Other findings indicated that the diet and blood levels of vitamin C were also important. In fact, supplementing smokers with vitamin C prevented the rapid disappearance of vitamin E that otherwise occurs in smokers. Thus, this demonstrated that the antioxidants, vitamin C and vitamin E, work together in the humans as part of an “antioxidant network” to potentially protect us from damage causing free radicals.

Prior to joining our department, Dr. Bruno was a Postdoctoral Research Associate working with Dr. Maret Traber at the Linus Pauling Institute at Oregon State University. During that time, he continued his work on vitamin E and conducted studies in the areas of vitamin E bioavailability and metabolism in humans using sophisticated stable isotope and mass spectrometry techniques. In addition, he conducted studies to understand how zinc deficiency regulates antioxidant status and oxidative damage. He also collaborated on studies aimed at developing new analytical procedures and biomarkers for determining the presence of oxidative stress in humans. For Dr. Bruno’s and his colleagues’ contribution to the vitamin E metabolism field, their work was named by the NIH’s Office of Dietary Supplements as being among the top 25 dietary supplement papers published worldwide in 2005.

At UConn, Dr. Bruno’s research laboratory is focused on understanding how antioxidants such as vitamin E and plant polyphenols can promote optimal health. Dr. Bruno’s research is targeted at evaluating dietary strategies that will be effective in reducing oxidative stresses that are caused by cigarette smoking and obesity. Collectively, these stresses are believed to contribute to the development and progression of various diseases including cardiovascular disease and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. Dr. Bruno recognizes that this area is no small task to tackle. Thus, he looks forward to working with other faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates at UConn to comprehensively investigate the roles that antioxidants have in regulating the oxidative stresses that are implicated in the development of these diseases.

To date, Dr. Bruno has authored or co-authored 21 articles or book chapters in the area of his research. In line with his expertise, he is a member of several scientific societies including the American Society for Nutrition, the Society for Free Radical Biology and Medicine, the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine, and the American Dietetic Association.

Although Dr. Bruno has lived in numerous parts of the country, he is no stranger to the New England area. He was born in Queens, NY, attended grade school in Holmdel, NJ, and spent many winter family vacations skiing the slopes in Vermont. In addition, Dr. Bruno has an interest in track and field and was a pole vaulter during his high school and university years, and was a volunteer pole vaulting coach at a high school in Oregon before moving to UConn.

Please join us in providing a long overdue welcome to Dr. Bruno to UConn!