Letter from the chair: Dr. Wayne Askew

If you will recall, in the last newsletter I mentioned that we were recruiting two new tenure track faculty members. We now have successfully hired two outstanding assistant professors for tenure track appointments, Julie Metos, Ph.D. R.D., and Anandh Velayutham, Ph.D. Interviews with these two new faculty members are included in this newsletter so you can get to know them better.

Our plan is to use these talented individuals to expand our faculty research and teaching expertise in order to provide a greater range of exposure and depth to new and exciting aspects of nutrition for our graduate students. These appointments will also facilitate attaining our near term goal of establishing a doctoral program in Nutrition at the University of Utah.

New College of Health Building? Well, not yet, although this may have been discussed while you were students here, as far back as 1995. No new building yet, but a number of improvements has taken place in the HPR Complex over the past fifteen years that have improved our physical facilities considerably. These consisted of moving the foods lab from the AE Emery building to the HPR complex, moving the nutrition clinic from the Annex to the basement of the HPR complex, remodeling the biochemistry laboratory including adding an environmental chamber and moving the Division of Nutrition offices from the north end of the N HPR building to the south end, gaining some much needed office space. We are currently renovating the Maurine Hegsted experimental foods laboratory with new countertops, cabinets, and appliances and augmenting the biochemistry laboratory with updated our research instrumentation and equipment. The foods lab is heavily used in both our graduate and undergraduate course instruction. Much of the original cabinetry came from the old foods lab in the AE Emery Building and has outlived its usefulness. The foods lab in 227 North HPR has become a focal point for our faculty and students and is a great instructional facility. Stop by and visit us and see the new foods lab next semester, if you are in town.

Our graduate students are most appreciative of scholarships to help defray their ever increasing tuition costs. Our past donors have established seven scholarships that we award annually at our Division scholarship banquet. Scholarship donors and their student recipients are also honored each year at the Health Sciences scholarship banquet. If you are interested in donating or establishing a scholarship in the Division of Nutrition, please contact interested in donating or establishing a scholarship in the Division of Nutrition, please contact me and we will work with our College of Health Development Officer, Todd McMaster, todd.mcmaster@hsc.utah.edu, to discuss this with you and how to make this happen.

Inside this issue:

Kelli Horton 2
Dr. Velayutham 2
Kary Woodruff 3
Dr. Wing-Gaia 4
Dr. Metos 5
Chef J Looney 6
Past Graduates 6
Kelli Horton: New Adjunct Lecturer

When she’s not jet setting across the globe, Kelli Horton can be found teaching nutrition classes at the University and working as a dietitian at the local VA Hospital. Kelli grew up in “Horsetown USA,” better known as Norco, California. Her interest in nutrition grew while on her high school swim and basketball teams. Once she learned she could make a career in nutrition she decided to pursue her Undergraduate degree in dietetics at BYU, and received a Master of Public Health from UCLA. Kelli completed her dietetics internship at the VA Hospital in West LA, and has since worked her way up to her current position as Assistant Chief of the Nutrition Department at the Salt Lake City VA Hospital. Kelli is the newest adjunct lecturer in the Division of Nutrition, and she loves putting her teaching skills to use. On the weekends, Kelli can be found hiking and running around the city, exploring new restaurants and baking up a storm in her kitchen.

The Division of Nutrition welcomes Dr. Anandh Velayutham

It is with pleasure we welcome our newest faculty member to the Division of Nutrition, Dr. Anandh Babu Pon Velayutham. Dr. Velayutham grew up in a small town in Tamil Nadu in southern India, famous for leather tanning, coconut plantations, and delicious food. At the University of Madras in India, Dr. Velayutham received his M.Sc. in Biochemistry, M.Phil. in Biochemistry, and Ph.D. in Biochemistry. In 2007, Dr. Velayutham moved to the United States to complete his postdoctoral research at Virginia Tech, which led him to Utah in 2012.

His research focuses on identifying novel dietary flavonoids for the prevention and treatment of vascular disease in diabetes and further defining the underlying molecular events. A few achievements of this humble biochemist include the American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship Award in 2010 and published highlights of his research on green tea in Life Extension Magazine in 2008. He has published fourteen peer-reviewed manuscripts, a review article, book chapters and abstracts; presented his research findings at scientific meetings, and lectured in biochemistry for more than twelve years at reputed institutions in India.

When asked what brought him to the University of Utah, he answered, “Great institution with Nobel laureates. Exciting opportunity for teaching and research. Attractive city with beautiful mountains. Best place to raise kids.” Dr. Velayutham is married to Chithra Geetha, and they have two sons, Naren and Vivek. Some personal interests include music, reading (literature), swimming, and yoga. We extend our warmest welcome to Dr. Velayutham and his family and look forward to all he will contribute to the school, the students, and the field of nutrition.
The Life of A Sports Dietician

Kary Woodruff is a sports dietitian at TOSH Orthopaedic Specialty Hospital. TOSH serves a wide variety of patients, with its services ranging from orthopedic surgery to nutrition counseling. Nutrition counseling at TOSH encompasses not only athletes but people of all ages and backgrounds. Kary says that the variety in clients she sees is one of the big perks of her job. The diversity keeps her learning and growing every day.

A large portion of being a sports dietitian is doing one-on-one consultations with athletes, and the foundation of the relationship must be one of trust. After trust has been gained, the dietician not only needs to be conscious about the nutritional demands that the sport places on the athlete, but also teach practical skills and methods to the athlete to meet those demands.

In addition to individual consultation, Kary performs cooking workshops, provides employee wellness initiatives, supervises graduate students, and participates in community outreach projects. Needless to say, Kary has a very well-rounded experience in nutrition and is making a large impact on people’s lives. Kary wanted to go into the field of nutrition because of how far-reaching the field could be on one person’s health; today we see her reaching far into many individual’s lives.

Organic Produce: Is It Really Better for You? by Alice Ma

When shopping at your local grocery store, you are likely to pass a few aisles entirely devoted to organic products. The labeling of a product as “organic” which is highly regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture, refers to foods and products that are grown and/or made using natural methods that support a sustainable environment. These days, you can buy food, lip balm, and even clothes that are organically-made.

A large market in the organic industry is produce. Organic produce is grown without the use of synthetic pesticides, hormones and antibiotics. Because of the use of natural growing techniques, some believe organic fruits and vegetables contain more nutrients than conventionally-grown produce. Studies have shown that this may be true with certain fruits and vegetables, but the difference is minimal and highly variable. Regardless of whether or not they are organic, fruits and vegetables provide a substantial amount of vitamins, minerals, and fiber and should be included as part of a healthy diet. The difference in nutrient content between organic and inorganic produce is likely very small.

Because organic produce is grown with fewer pesticides, consumers often believe that choosing it over conventional produce will reduce their risk for cancer. The pesticide level in all foods, whether they are organic or not, is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. Because the levels of pesticides in foods don’t exceed the thresholds set by the government, all foods are generally considered safe for consumption.

In conclusion, when debating about whether or not to buy organic, be sure to consider other factors besides nutrition. Although organic foods sometimes cost a little more, their environmentally impact is minimal compared to conventionally-grown foods. If you are purchasing organic solely for the perceived health benefits, you may want to reconsider your options.
For the past two years, Dr. Stacie Wing-Gaia has had the unique opportunity to conduct research on climbers summiting Mt. Everest. Many studies espouse the ability of leucine to preserve muscle mass at sea level, and Dr. Wing-Gaia wondered if leucine supplementation would preserve muscle mass in climbers at high altitudes. According to Wing-Gaia, the challenge for alpine climbers is the significant weight loss and loss of muscle that occurs at high altitudes. Muscle wasting not only affects performance, but can also increase the risk of injury and impair the immune function of climbers, all of which can be deadly consequences in such an unforgiving environment.

A pilot study conducted in 2011 showed inconclusive results, so in the spring of 2012, Wing-Gaia returned to Everest and conducted a second study. Climbers were given two packets of whey protein-based leucine each day (each packet containing seven grams) to mix into hot chocolate. The climbers started at 9,000 ft and ascended to about 18,000 ft in thirteen days. The data from this study are yet to be determined, but Wing-Gaia mentions that there was noticeable weight loss and muscle wasting in all of the climbers. Dr. Wing-Gaia admits that conducting studies in these remote and challenging environments is difficult. However, she still believes that leucine supplementation can be effective for maintaining lean body mass in climbers. We can’t wait to read her paper!

Beverly Bradshaw – An Outstanding Professor and the New Focused Area of Study (FAS) Advisor

Beverly Bradshaw is an inspirational professor and Registered Dietitian. Her soft-spoken enthusiasm and sincere passion for healthy living is evident in each of her lectures, where she provides powerful messages to all of her students. When asked what she loves so much about teaching, she says “It is something I can do to help people prevent disease. I can give people information to apply in their own lives and maybe they will learn something that will help them down the road.”

Beverly has been a member of the University of Utah’s Division of Nutrition for fifteen years. She received her Bachelor’s degree in health education, her master’s degree in nutrition (which prepared her to become a Registered Dietitian), and later she returned to the University of Utah to earn a PhD in health promotion and education. During her fifteen years as faculty Beverly has designed and taught various courses for the Division of Nutrition, including the popular “Nutrition and Women’s Health” course that she currently teaches. She recently accepted a position as the Focused Area of Study (FAS) Advisor for the Divisions Coordinated Master’s Nutrition Program, serving as the committee chair for all student’s working on FAS projects. Beverly acts as a coach for these students as they complete their projects and helps the students understand the steps required to complete their projects and graduate on time.

In addition to her work at the University, Beverly has also spent time working as a diabetes educator at St. Mark’s Hospital and currently works part time as a Registered Dietitian for American Express. She enjoys her part-time positions and balances her work and personal life with hobbies including gourmet cooking, travel, designing jewelry and other art, and ballroom dancing! Hats off to this busy professor!
As the newest appointed tenure track faculty member in the University of Utah’s Division of Nutrition, Dr. Julie Metos is pushing forward in her already well-established career. Her current research focuses on childhood and adolescent obesity prevention, and she is interested in learning how teams that treat childhood weight change develop. She is especially interested in how people best work together to improve the environment for children. Some of her other research interests include the implementation and evaluation of policies and group behaviors surrounding childhood obesity.

To conduct her research, Dr. Metos uses the Utah population database in conjunction with geographic information systems (GIS) to map out where children live and what influences their obesity risk, both in school and community environments. She also measures key outcome variables, including body mass index.

Along with Dr. Metos’ promotion comes added responsibility. She states that the biggest difference in her new position as a tenure track faculty member is the accountability for all necessary research funding. However, with an already successful career that only continues to rise, Dr. Metos is certainly up to the challenge.

**RECIPE: FRUIT COMPOTE**
**BY JENNIFER NORTH**

Core an apple, leaving the peel on. Place the fruit in a microwave-safe dish.

Fill the center with unsalted pumpkin seeds, chopped walnuts, and pomegranate seeds. Sprinkle with cinnamon and drizzle with honey. Cover and cook on high for three to four minutes, or until tender. Let the fruit cool slightly, then top with a dollop of vanilla Greek yogurt.

This treat is full of healthy fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, polyphenols, and heart-healthy antioxidants.

**ENJOY!**
(from runnersworld.com)
In May 2012, the Division of Nutrition recognized Laura Lee Robson as an Outstanding Alumnus for her near thirty years of service at the University of Utah Hospital. Laura received her bachelor’s degree in nutrition from the University of Utah in 1973. Following graduation, she completed her dietetic practicum at the University of Utah Hospital. Initially hired as the cafeteria manager, she quickly became the Nutrition Care Assistant Director and finally in 1983 was named director of Nutrition Care Services. Not one to relax, Laura pursued a Master of Public Administration from Brigham Young University in 1987, enriching her role as director, which has provided her with many work experiences as the field of nutrition has evolved over the past thirty years.

Laura states that one of the biggest challenges of her job is providing excellent customer service and quality food with diminishing resources. And over the past twenty years, the customer expectations have changed. “With hospitals being competitive and the availability of the internet, our customers are more educated and have higher expectations,” Laura explains. Laura has worked with her staff to improve the options available to students.

Laura’s skills are widely regarded throughout the nation as current and innovative. The Division of Nutrition honors Laura as an individual who has had a remarkable career and thanks her for her service to the field of nutrition and the University of Utah.

Our New Full-Time Chef
By: Nicole Williams

This year the Division of Nutrition is pleased to welcome a full-time chef to the department, Chef J Looney. Chef J began working at the University of Utah fall of 2011 as part-time instructor. Now, Chef J teaches the lab portion of the Cultural Aspects of Food course alongside two highly esteemed nutrition professors, Rachel Jones and Tahmina Martelly. The course provides students with the opportunity to explore a wide variety of foods among various cultures, while the lab gives students the opportunity to participate in hands-on preparation of foods from different cultures.

Chef J is an incredible asset to the Division of Nutrition, as he has such a profound love of food and a great desire to share it with others. Chef J loves everything about cooking: the shopping, the preparation, creating new recipes, and the craftsmanship it involves. In fact, Chef J loves cooking so much that he admits that he has no other hobbies and spends almost every waking hour performing some aspect of cooking.

Chef J loves teaching the students at the U and says that he experiences so much joy when students come back to him saying that they got in the kitchen and experimented with food. We love having Chef J around – his sense of humor and his delicious food truly make the department a brighter place!
Where are they now?

**Jennifer Aton**

Since graduating from the CMP in 2009, Jennifer has been working as a dietitian at Intermountain Medical Center, where she covers the Newborn ICU (NICU) as well as the Adult Trauma and Surgical floors of the hospital. She explains that the most rewarding part of her job is getting to know the infants in the NICU as well as their families. “I enjoy being part of helping them grow and develop from birth to when they are strong enough to go home,” adds Jennifer.

Outside of work she likes to ski and climb as well as practice yoga and pilates. Jennifer has a dog named Bailey she is fully devoted to, even describing him as “her child”. She also enjoys travelling and especially likes going on river trips in southern and eastern Utah.

---

**By: Beth Miller**

“When asked about what advice she would give to current CMP students, she explains that it is important to tailor the program to meet your own individual needs. Jennifer explains, “If there is one area that you are interested in, use projects in all of your classes to learn more about that area.””

---

**Jessica LaRoche**

Since graduating in 2010, Jessica has become the first full-time Registered Dietitian (RD) employed by Harmons grocery store in Salt Lake City. She has been working there since March 2011. While Harmons is not the first grocery store to hire a full-time RD, it is the first in Utah. Since hiring Jessica, two other graduates of the CMP program, Jonnell Masson (2011) and Laura Holtrop-Kohl (2010), have also been hired full-time to work at the different Harmons locations. Jessica says there is no “typical day” working at Harmons. She spends time working with customers answering questions, giving store tours, and providing samplings of products. The rest of her time is spent with store employees. She provides healthy snacks, and nutrition advice, and employees can receive insurance points for meeting with her. She also spends time planning and developing materials and other related tasks common to newly created positions.

When asked what her favorite thing is about working at Harmons, she states that she absolutely loves her job; it is a great location to put what you’re telling people into practice, such as showing a customer what a lean cut of meat is rather than simply telling them to purchase lean cuts of meat. She also says her work at Harmons is focused more on prevention rather than treatment. Jessica welcomes your visit at the new Station Park store.