



# The Perpetual Food Scientist

## Rutgers Food Science Alumni Update



### Welcome Message from the Chair

2024-2025 Committee Chair – Akino Tomizawa (SEBS '21)

Can you believe that the Fall semester is already over? As quickly as it went, there were certainly some memorable moments we created with the Rutgers Food Science students and fellow alumni!

October started with our annual Alumni Mixer and the Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards, which celebrated some prominent members of our alumni committee. Without a doubt, the most popular word used to describe the caliber of our alumni community was “awe,” and I could not agree more! Congratulations again to all our 2024-2025 Alumni Awards Winners! You all exemplify the excellence and commitment to giving back exhibited by so many of our alumni family.

Another event that featured prominent alumni and in particular the excellent women in Food Science was the Undergraduate Food Science Club’s Women in Food Science Panel during which stories of the hardships and successes we have experienced as women in food science along with various tidbits of advice helped undergraduate students better understand the unique challenges we have and continue to face as women in food science. We hope the triumphs of this distinguished panel of alumni have helped to inspire the next generation of women in food science to persevere and teach others the value of allyship and support.

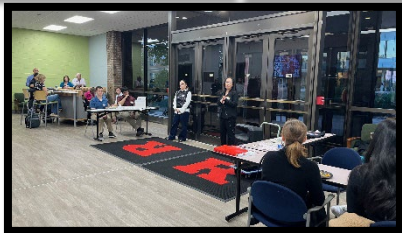
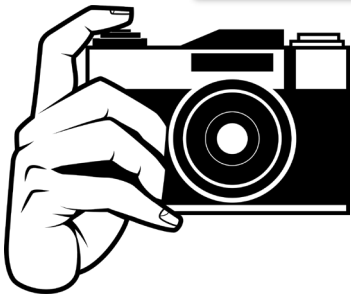


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WEBSITE | <https://foodsci.rutgers.edu/Alumni/>

# Fall Recap

- **15 OCT 2024** – Alumni & Student Mixer + the 2024-2025 Alumni Awards
- **5 DEC 2024** – Women in Food Science Panel (Hosted by the Undergraduate Food Science Club)







# ...and the winners are...!

*Congratulations to the recipients of the  
2024-2025 Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards!!*



Lifetime Achievement  
**Margaret  
"Peggy"  
Poole, Ph.D**  
The 2024-2025 Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards



Outstanding Leadership  
**JoAnn  
Fritsche**  
The 2024-2025 Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards



Scientific Achievement  
**Dr. Julie  
Hirsch**  
The 2024-2025 Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards



Outstanding Communication  
**Rebecca  
Dengrove**  
The 2024-2025 Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards



Special Recognition  
**Irene  
Weston**  
The 2024-2025 Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards



Outstanding Student  
**Michael  
Shen**  
The 2024-2025 Rutgers Food Science Alumni Awards



# Greetings from the Food Science Department Chair

Greetings from the Chair of the Department of Food Science! I'm pleased to report that the state of the department is good. We have been joined by Dr. Tianming Yao who is a new assistant professor hired as part of a cluster higher on metabolic health. Dr. Yao is joined by three other colleagues from the cluster in the Department of Animal Sciences the Department of Biochemistry in Microbiology and the Department of Nutritional Sciences. The development of the cluster hire was led by our former department chair Dr. Karl Matthews and delivered under my leadership. Dr. Yao's responsibilities will include teaching of both undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as conducting research focusing on the relationship between food components and their impact on gut health. He received his Ph.D. In Food Science from Purdue University in 2021. He has been employed as a post-doctoral research associate at Purdue University since January 2022, where he worked closely with leading scientists in the fields of carbohydrate chemistry and the gut microbiome. We are also hiring another new assistant professor Dr. Nuanyi Liang who is expected to join us in August 2025. Dr. Liang's responsibilities will include teaching of both undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as conducting research on bioconversion of food wastes to produce functional lipid compounds with applications in foods and use of metabolomics to understand relationship between oxylipins and development of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's Disease. She received her Ph.D. in Food Science and Technology from the University of Alberta in 2020. She has been employed as a post-doctoral scholar at the University of California Davis since August 2020, where she worked closely with leading scientists in the fields of lipid metabolism in peripheral and central nervous system disorders. Other changes include a new roof on Food Science and Nutritional Sciences (FSNS) East (the building formerly known as CAFT), with another new roof expected on FSNS West this summer. We also have a newly renovated lobby in FSNS West, reflecting our shared occupancy of the spaces with our colleagues in the Department of Nutritional Sciences.



## Instructors Corner

What's new with Nutrigenomics and Nutraceuticals? This course has been taught by Dr. Laura Rokosz since 2016 and has evolved considerably with improved understanding of the human genome. This course focuses on how your genes (specific genes) impact the way you metabolize food and how your diet impacts the way your genes are expressed. Another core component focuses on the epigenome, representing the chemical modifications made by food components that turn genes on and off.

Our discussions include a comprehensive accounting of the relationship between nutraceuticals and disease management. We cover many therapeutic areas including, but not limited to, obesity and diabetes, immuno-biological diseases, neurological imbalances, fertility and cancer.

Classroom discussions focus on the most up-to-date Science around the human microbiome and gut health, the utility of CRISPR technology for disease management and now, the pharmacology of GLP-1 based medicines. In addition to completion of MidTerm and Final exams, students are also asked to write a 5000 word research paper on the Nutrigenomics known about a specific disease area of their choosing. Previous topics have included Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Asthma, Psoriasis and Diabetes (which is not as popular as you would think). Students then record a podcast with a classmate or colleague that focuses the topic of their paper. The quality and intriguing content of some of the students' podcasts rivals that of many seasoned podcasters.

Nutrigenomics and Nutraceuticals is offered to all Graduate students, Undergraduates and Distance learners who meet the course criteria.

Course criteria: 01:160:162 GENERAL CHEMISTRY and 01:119:116 GENERAL BIOLOGY II and 11:709:255 NUTRITION AND HEALTH) or (11:400:104 FOOD AND HEALTH ))

It is currently scheduled on Mondays from 5:40 pm to 8:40 pm. Enrollment for the Spring 2025 semester ends January 28th.



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# Undergraduate Student Update

Hello!

Our club is dedicated to supporting all undergraduate Food Science students. The Executive Board plays a vital role in organizing events, coordinating activities, and ensuring our members have the resources they need to succeed. We also work closely with faculty to address student concerns and foster a supportive, collaborative community.

## 2024-25 Executive Board:

- President: Renee Procaccini
- Internal Vice President: Lia Vaynshteyn
- External Vice President: Alba Paz Sanchez
- Secretary: Chris Whippich
- Treasurer: Daniel Shlez
- Social Media Manager: Kelly Casazza
- IFT Representative: Romit Bhaumik
- IFT Representative: Alex Glazer

## What have we done so far?

I have listed below some of what we had accomplished this past semester!

- Club Meetings: We have our biweekly meetings on Monday nights, where we have engaging meetings for students to learn and destress. Some meetings we had this semester was a Miracle Berry Tasting, and making our own sourdough starters. We also had Food Science Trivia, an Internship Panel, and some holiday fun!
- Professional Development: We had a Senior Talent Acquisition Partner, Zachary Greer, from Puratos come and host a workshop on Networking and Interviews. He also had given great insight into LinkedIn tips and how to stand out when entering their careers in the food industry. We also partnered with the Alumni committee to have students attend a speed networking event which helped them to build their networking skills.
- Trips: We had two trips this past semester. We had students attend the Museum of Ice cream in New York City as well as the Turkey Hill factory in Columbia, Pennsylvania. Students have a great experience getting to learn about ice cream and tea by even participating in a Tea Sensory at the Factory!
- Alumni Engagement: This semester, we were excited to host our first-ever Women in Food Science Panel, where students connected with strong women in industry to discuss their experience. We also held our Annual Holiday Party, bringing together students, faculty, and alumni to celebrate the season and strengthen community ties. We hope to see even more alumni join us for these events next year!
- Internship and Career Opportunities: We were beyond glad and grateful to have DSM-Firmenich, Ingredion, Mondelez, Campbells, Pepsico, Robertet, & Mars come and speak to students. They had discussed their internship and career opportunities and had some great sessions with students. We are fortunate to have these companies give our students a chance to make their marks in the industry.



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## What's Next?

• This semester is packed with exciting plans and opportunities for everyone to get involved! We're thrilled to announce that we'll be organizing a trip to Hershey Park, offering a fun-filled day to unwind and connect with each other. Additionally, we're inviting more companies to come and speak, giving students the chance to network and gain insights into various industries. We're especially proud to be hosting the College Bowl this year, where we'll not only showcase our knowledge and teamwork but also welcome participants from other schools for an unforgettable competition. Plus, we'll be actively participating in Student Night, a highlight event that fosters collaboration and celebration among peers. It's going to be a semester full of growth, learning, and fun!

## Get Involved!

We are always eager to connect with our alumni community. If you're interested in speaking at a club event, hosting students at your workplace, or simply reconnecting, please reach out! Your expertise and guidance are invaluable to the next generation of food scientists.

Stay tuned for more updates, and thank you for your continued support of the Undergraduate Rutgers Food Science Club!

Warm regards,

Renee Procaccini

President, Undergraduate Food Science Club





# Graduate Student Update – Fall 2024

The Food Science GSA wrapped up an exciting and eventful Fall Semester!

We kicked things off with a membership event to introduce students to the benefits of joining IFT and ways to get involved in our exciting community.

October was packed with highlights, including the return of our fan-favorite Halloween Costume Party! Creativity was on full display, and our social media chair, Eric Chan, won the award for "Best Original Costume." Additionally, we had the pleasure of welcoming Walter Keller, a Rutgers alumnus and industry leader, who shared his inspiring journey and experiences since leaving Rutgers. His insights into career growth and innovation in the food industry left us all motivated and energized.

In November, GSA reached new heights with several initiatives:

- We were proud to receive the Wellness Connection grant from ScarletWell for our "Visible" mini-event series. This initiative focuses on supporting underrepresented groups in Food Science by fostering an inclusive and supportive community. Through collaborations with Rutgers' Social Justice Education, RU Global, and CAPS, we created impactful programming to strengthen connections and promote wellness.
- For the first time, we participated in IFTSA's Festive Foodie Box Exchange, partnering with the ESPOL Ecuador chapter to exchange regional goodies and share university pride.
- Our much-anticipated Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner was a highlight of the semester. We enjoyed a feast of traditional and international dishes while making new friends and reconnecting with familiar faces.

As we look ahead, we're thrilled to announce two major events happening in Spring 2025:

1. IFT Student Night at Rutgers on February 20<sup>th</sup>, where we'll host professional development activities and connect with industry leaders.
2. The highly anticipated College Bowl competition on March 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>, where Rutgers will compete against five universities in a fun and challenging food science showdown!

From learning opportunities to cultural exchanges and community-building events, this semester has been an incredible journey for GSA. We can't wait to see what the next semester brings!

STUDENT:  
Trina Baptista  
Charley Wang

FACULTY SPONSOR:  
Dr. Don Schaffner

SCHOOL/UNIT:  
School of Environmental  
and Biological Sciences

### Visible

Mini-event series focused on underrepresented groups in food science to provide information, connections, and community.

FOOD SCIENCE GSA & RU GLOBAL-ISSS  
**CPT/OPT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

NOV. 8, 2024 12:00-1:30 PM  
READING ROOM (102) FOOD SCIENCE BUILDING  
OPEN TO EVERYONE, LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

PART OF SCARLETTWELL GRANT AWARDED PROJECT, VISIBLE TO UNDERSTAND, RECOGNIZE, AND CONNECT UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

FOOD SCIENCE GSA & CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION  
**SAFE(R) SPACE**

Provide a foundation of knowledge to be an effective advocate to LGBTQIA+ students. Understand the terminology, discuss the privilege and oppression, and learn to be an ally.

NOV. 1, 2024 12:00-2:00 PM  
READING ROOM (102) FOOD SCIENCE BUILDING  
OPEN TO EVERYONE, LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

PART OF SCARLETTWELL GRANT AWARDED PROJECT, VISIBLE TO UNDERSTAND, RECOGNIZE, AND CONNECT UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

FOOD SCIENCE GSA & CAPS Center for Anxiety and Panic Studies  
**FROM STRESS TO SUCCESS**

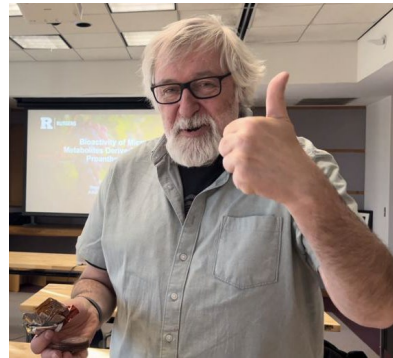
NOV. 1, 2024 11:00-12:00 PM  
READING ROOM (102) FOOD SCIENCE BUILDING  
OPEN TO EVERYONE, LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

PART OF THE SCARLETTWELL GRANT AWARDED PROJECT, VISIBLE TO UNDERSTAND, RECOGNIZE, AND CONNECT UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS



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## RU FOOD SCIENCE TALK



### WALTER KELLER

MS FOOD SCIENCE, GENERAL MBA

Walter is a retired Rutgers alumni with an established career in food science at PepsiCo, Unilever and Symrise. He has worked in product development, flavor innovation, and global regulatory management, with achievements such as pioneering yogurt-based ice pops.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2024

1:00-2:00 PM

FOOD SCIENCE BUILDING 102 (READING ROOM)



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WEBSITE | <https://foodsci.rutgers.edu/Alumni/>

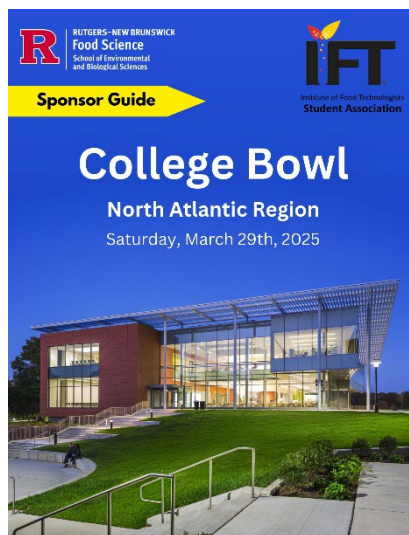


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# Calling All Alumni

The Rutgers Food Science GSA and Undergraduate FS Club are seeking donations of items to include in swag bags for Student Night 2025. If interested in donating items and for additional details please contact: Charley Wang [change.wang@rutgers.edu](mailto:change.wang@rutgers.edu) or Trina Baptista [trinatn@rutgers.edu](mailto:trinatn@rutgers.edu)

Looking for talented RU Food Science students or graduates to fill a role or internship? Consider participating in the NYIFT Student Night 2025 Mini Career Fair! Please contact Charley Wang [change.wang@rutgers.edu](mailto:change.wang@rutgers.edu) or Trina Baptista [trinatn@rutgers.edu](mailto:trinatn@rutgers.edu)



Please click image above for full College Bowl Flyer (including sponsorship opportunities)

## Upcoming Events

Thursday 2.20.2025 4-8 PM	NYIFT Student Night – IFNH
Thursday 3.13.2025 5 PM	NYIFT Dinner Meeting @ MDLZ – Speaker – Dr. Donald Schaffner
Friday 3.28.2025	Pre-College Bowl Career & Networking Night
Saturday 3.29.2025	IFTSA North Atlantic College Bowl @ Rutgers University
Tuesday 4.15.2025 9-6 PM	NYIFT Suppliers Day – NJ Convention & Exhibition Center
Wednesday 4.2025 (TBD)	Dishing Out Success: Jobs, Negotiations, and Financial Savvy
Saturday 4.26.2025 10-4 PM	Rutgers Day 2025



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# Join Us at NYIFTs Student Night 2025!



Thursday February 20, 2025 @ 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm

## Schedule

- **4-5:45 PM**  
Poster & Career Sessions
- **5:45-7:00 PM**  
Awards & Panel Discussion
  - Moderator: Dr. Donald W. Schaffner
  - Panelists: Debbie Levine (Ingredion, Inc.), Patrick Riolo (Allen Flavors), Dana Daneker Gasiorowski (IFF)
- **7-8 PM**  
Buffet Dinner & Dessert

## Fees

- **Members** – \$55
- **Non-Members** – \$60
- **Unemployed, Retired, & EXCOM Members** – \$30
- **Rutgers Students** – \$15
- **Montclair Students** – \$30

## Location

New Jersey Institute of Food Nutrition & Health (IFNH)  
61 Dudley Road,  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

[You Must Pre-Register for Parking](#)

## Career Fair (Companies Represented):

- dsm-firmenich (Health, Nutrition & Care)
- Ingredion
- Campbell's
- Kerry
- PepsiCo



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**The Rutgers Food Science Students  
and Alumni Committee Appreciate  
the Generous Swag Bag Item  
Donations from the Following  
Companies:**

