

The Perpetual Food Scientist

The Rutgers Food
Science Alumni
Update



NYIFT Suppliers Day Expo & Seminar – April 15, 2025



Greetings from the Chair

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

As we head into another exciting academic year, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the lively and eventful Spring 2025 semester. Thanks to your continued support, our students, faculty, and alumni remained active, engaged, and inspired. Here's a look back at some of the highlights:

In **February**, our students shined at NYIFT's Student Night with poster presentations and scholarships. We're especially grateful to the alumni who donated swag and joined us for the career fair. Your support, and contributions from companies like Kerry, Campbell's, Symrise, Ingredion, dsm-firmenich, PepsiCo, Egglock Nutrition, Bigelow Tea, Allen Flavors, and Mondelez, made the evening a great success.

In **March**, we hosted the IFT North Atlantic College Bowl, welcoming teams from Cornell and UMass Amherst for a day of fun and competition.

April offered a full calendar of events: beginning with a valuable panel on financial literacy, continuing with the annual NYIFT Supplier Expo, and culminating in a vibrant Rutgers Day with the students' ice cream sale and an alumni scavenger hunt.

We wrapped up the semester in **July** at IFT FIRST in Chicago, where our annual meetup was a great opportunity to reconnect with alumni and celebrate Rutgers Food Science.

To all our alumni and committee members: **Thank You** for your continued time, energy, and enthusiasm. Your involvement continues to shape the experiences of our students and strengthen the Rutgers Food Science community.



Spring Recap



- **20 Feb 2025** – NYIFT Student Night – Uncovering Artificial Ingredients: Risks, Regulations & Revolution – 2025 Scholarships + Poster Presentations, Thanks to our Alums who donated swag and/or participated in the career fair! **Kerry, Campbell's, Symrise, Ingredion, dsm-firmenich, PepsiCo, Egglock Nutrition, Bigelow Tea, Allen Flavors and Mondelez.**
- **29 Mar 2025** – Rutgers hosts IFTs North Atlantic College Bowl w/ students visiting from Cornell and UMass Amherst!
- **2 Apr 2025** – A Recipe for Success: A Panel Discussion on Salary Negotiation, Total Compensation & Money Management
- **15 Apr 2025** – NYIFT Supplier Expo & Seminar
- **26 Apr 2025** – Rutgers Day – Ice Cream Sale (Students) and Scavenger Hunt (Alums)
- **14 Jul 2025** – Rutgers FS @ IFT FIRST – Annual Meetup at the National Conference



Greetings from the Food Science Department Chair

Greetings from the Chair of the Department of Food Science! I am pleased to report that the state of the department remains very good. Dr. Tianming Yao joined us on January 1 st , 2025. Dr. Yao has been busy setting up his lab and hiring a postdoctoral researcher. He's also been helping with guest lectures in different classes. He's also hired a graduate student who will be supported on a departmental teaching assistantship. Starting in 2026 Dr. Yao will begin moving towards his full teaching responsibilities. He will be co-teaching Food Microbiology lab with Dr. Chikindas, and he will have additional graduate teaching responsibilities in our Food Carbohydrates class.

We very pleased to report that another new assistant professor Dr. Nuanyi Liang joined us on August 1 st , 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.

We are delighted to report that on March 1st , 2026, we will be joined by Dr. Byron Chaves as an Associate Extension Specialist. Dr. Chaves comes to us from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Dr. Chaves is a broadly trained Food Scientist with expertise in Microbial Risk Management/Food Safety. His research is multi-faceted, and he studies antimicrobial interventions, predictive modeling and environmental sanitation. He has garnered \$3.0M in funding as a PI and Co-PI, in his previous position. At Rutgers he will continue the same of lines of research as well as his extension program and he will be part of our department of teaching at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

We are also in the process of completing our search for a non-tenure-track assistant teaching professor who will contribute to our undergraduate teaching in food processing and food engineering, and who will oversee the activities going on in our three department pilot plants. We expect to have an offer letter to send to the top applicant within a week or two.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the IFT FIRST conference in Chicago Illinois. It was great to be able to talk with other Food Science administrators to share our success stories about hiring new faculty and to strategize about the common challenges facing all our programs. I was also able to attend our annual informal alumni gathering and reconnect with recent graduates, mid-career professionals and some old timers!

Finally, I want to share some very exciting news regarding a recent donation to the department. I was contacted in March of this year to say that we had been left a donation from the estate of Setsuko Hayakawa who passed away 2023. Setsuko was the wife of Kan-Ichi Hayakawa who passed away in 2009. Dr. Hayakawa was on the Department of Food Science faculty from 1964 to 1999. He was the major advisor for 14 Ph.D. students and a world leader in research in thermal processing of foods. He was probably the first food scientist to ever use a super computer in his research. If you go to this link <https://www.digifind-it.com/clark/DATA/newspapers/patriot/1969/1969-08-07.pdf> and scroll down to the article "Numbers Game Food Scientist Puts More Faith in His Abacus" you'll see Dr. Hayakawa using his abacus. This \$3M donation from the Hayakawa's will be used to support graduate students studying Food Science, with preference given to those studying Food Engineering.



Instructors Corner - Student Focus: Elvis Tavares



Over the past ten (or slightly more) years, since I have been teaching College classes, I have encountered many remarkable students. But this year one student in particular captured my attention, not only because of his intellect but also because of the circumstances in which he joined the class. Elvis Taveras, RU'22 is an active-duty Military reservist in the United States Marine Corp (USMC), who participated in my Nutrigenomics and Nutraceuticals class as a distance learner, logging in weekly from various anonymous locations. Each week we had to wait for Elvis to obtain approval from his commanding officer before he was able to join the class, as he was participating in classified operations.

Since my husband is a Marine I am well-acquainted with the Military's reputation for high standards, so was not surprised by Elvis' list of impressive credentials. Since 2018, he has served in the USMC as an Electronics Maintainer, which means he is responsible for the Military's communication equipment and security protocols. This skill sure would have come in handy if Elvis attended class in person as his classmates will attest that the audio-visual equipment in Room 107 (of the Food Science building) was nothing short of a pain-in-the-you-know-what. Elvis has also provided support to the National Guard helping Asylum seekers with logistics, transportation and temporary housing, where his bilingual skills were put to good use.

Elvis first graduated from Rutgers with Bachelor of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering and Psychology in May of 2022. He is expected to complete his Master of Applied Science in Business and Science (MBS) in May of 2026. This is no small feat as he has a full-time job as a Residential Direct Sales Account Executive with AlticeUSA and has managed to complete a Product Development internship with Allen Flavors, Inc. from Feb 2024-May 2024. Elvis is definitely not waiting for opportunities to fall into his lap. He is taking the figurative bull-by-the-horn and running with it.

In true USMC fashion Elvis went above and beyond with a key assignment for the Nutrigenomics and Nutraceuticals class. All students are asked to record a podcast (instead of making an in-class presentation which is soooo yesterday) related to a Nutrigenomics paper they had to write. Elvis recorded his podcast with multiple people which is rather unique since the assignment only requires that you record the podcast with one other person. I was also impressed that after submitting his podcast he uploaded it to his YouTube channel which garnered much enthusiastic feedback. I will likely share this inspiring scenario with future students.

If this is not enough I have saved the most impressive part of Elvis' Bio for last. He endeavors to become a food engineer and food business entrepreneur. In his shared Biopic he writes:

"...I aspire to develop nutritious food products, utilize exciting food technologies, build food brands, collaborate with successful food businesses, and much more. I strive to become a better person every day and become the best version of myself. With vision and zeal, I see myself 5 or 10 years from today in a thriving and dynamic career and lifestyle environment. Through persistent dedication and tenacity, I strive to grow through what I go through. I want to become an innovator, an expert, a Nobel peace prize winner, an entrepreneur, a guru, financially free, a father, a husband, and a shining example of an American Citizen. The food, health, and nutrition industries will feel the impact that was founded through working on my crafts and passion in this Master of Business and Science at Rutgers program."

Hear that? Drop the mic.



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

Calling All Alumni

Have you considered taking on a leadership role at your Alma Mater? The Rutgers Food Science Alumni Committee is currently seeking a new Chair for the 2025-2026 academic year! If you are interested in leading exciting initiatives to give back to Rutgers Students and the greater Rutgers Food Science community, please reach out to Akino Tomizawa (our current chair) at akino.tomizawa@gmail.com to express interest/intent and if you have any questions regarding this role!

Upcoming Events

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| • Tuesday September 9, 2025 , 5-8 PM
(CNJIIFT Dinner Meeting) | Wine & Dine at the Grape Escape
12 Stults Road, Suite 101, Dayton, NJ 08810 |
| • September 15, 2025, 1-2 PM | Fireside Chat on Food Waste/Sustainability
w/Jessica Swift, NJDOH, Retail Food Project
Coordinator/ES IV
Register: https://bit.ly/4629mSN |
| • Friday October 3, 2025 – 3-4 PM (CAFT 120) | Graduate Seminar: Benefits of IFT Membership |
| • Wednesday October 15, 2025, 5-8 PM | Replacing FD&C Colors – B2 Bistro and Bar
230 Washington Place North Brunswick, NJ 08902 |
| • Tuesday October 21, 2025 – 530-8 PM | Alumni & Student Speed Networking: Featuring
the 2025-2026 Alumni Awards
IFNH – 61 Dudley Road New Brunswick 08901 |
| • Monday November 17, 2025, 3-5 PM | Digital Transformation: Reimagining Food Product
Development with AI
Microsoft's NYC Times Square Office
11 Times Sq, New York, NY 10036 |

****Events in RED are Planned & Hosted by the Rutgers
Food Science Alumni Committee****



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

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