Nutritional Sciences Alumnus Survives Hurricane Sandy

Dr. Liang “Charles” Guo (PhD, 2009) is a pioneer, though he probably doesn’t realize it: He was the first person to graduate from the FSHN Department’s interdisciplinary PhD program in Nutritional Sciences.

In 2008, FSHN created a distinct PhD program in Nutritional Sciences, separate from the general PhD in Food Science & Human Nutrition. Dr. Robert Cousins (Boston Family Professor of Human Nutrition & Director of the UF Center for Nutritional Sciences) is the Director of the PhD program and also served as Dr. Guo’s research mentor.

The interdisciplinary PhD program includes areas of emphasis in genetics, immunology, biochemistry and molecular biology, physiology, and biostatistics as well as general nutritional sciences. Dr. Guo’s research focused on identifying zinc transporters in the exocrine pancreas, evaluating their role in zinc secretion, and defining the physiological effects of zinc transporter expression in pancreatic cells.

Dr. Guo arrived at UF with a bachelor’s degree in Biological Sciences from Fudan University in Shanghai, China, and was admitted directly into the PhD program. During his tenure in FSHN, he was recognized with a prestigious Checkers Scholarship and was selected by the FSHN faculty to receive the 2009 “Best Dissertation Award” in recognition of his exceptional research skills. In 2008 and 2009, he was the student liaison for the Graduate and Professional Education Committee of the American Society for Nutrition. He also served as a teaching assistant for DIE4125 Food Systems Management and HUN5246 Current Issues in Dietary Supplements.

Currently, Dr. Guo is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Division of Cardiology at New York University Medical Center in New York City, a position that his mentor, Dr. Cousins, advised him to choose. His research now focuses on nutrition and its impact on cardiovascular health. More specifically, he is striving to better understand the basic biology of genetic and dietary factors. These factors include niacin, fish oil, and glucose/insulin signaling in lipid and lipoprotein metabolism. He hopes that his work will contribute to ongoing efforts to fight diet-related chronic diseases.

Dr. Guo is now an active member of the American Society for Nutrition’s Young Professional Interest Group, honing his leadership skills and making important professional connections. He said that he is still learning but is confident that this post-doc position will help him build a successful career, whether he chooses academia or another path. He added that although his current research is different than what he experienced in his doctoral program in FSHN, the training he received from Dr. Cousins and other faculty in the Nutritional Sciences PhD program was “unparalleled” and has allowed him to make a smooth transition.

Recently, Dr. Guo faced an entirely different sort of challenge in the form of a record-breaking hurricane. On October 29 of this year, Hurricane Sandy hit the Northeastern US coast. It was the largest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded, and its storm surge flooded the streets of New York and resulted in…

Cont. on page 4
Fredreana Hester (BS, 2012) is pursuing a master’s degree in food science at Alabama A&M Univ.

Michelle Corrado (BS, 2012) is in a National Institutes of Health internship at the National Human Genome Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

Chloe Liotta (BS, 2012) was hired as a Research Technologist with National Deli in Miami.

Yuly Virviescas (BS, 2011) was recently promoted to Business Development Specialist at ABC Research, Inc. in Gainesville.

Dr. Walter Kelley, DO, is a Fellow of the College of American Pathologists and a 2002 BS graduate. After two years in the Public Health Service based at the Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Dr. Kelley went on to become the Medical Director of the Oklahoma Blood Institute, the ninth largest independent blood center in the country. Board Certified in Clinical Pathology and Blood Banking and Transfusion Medicine, Dr. Kelley uses the strong foundation in GMP and quality control from his FSHN education to ensure the safety and potency of the blood supply over the four states for which he is responsible. Not to neglect the nutrition side of his Gator degree, Dr. Kelley participated in research on iron replacement in blood donors at the NIH, and is exploring the application of these investigations in his blood donors in Oklahoma and the surrounding states. Walter and his wife Kara (UF BAE, 2001; UF MEd, 2002) have three sons and are expecting baby boy #4 at Christmas. Dr. Kelley added: “Feel Good. Give Blood. Go Gators!”

Michelle Zitt, (MS-DI, 2012) is currently pursuing a PhD in nutritional science at the University of Tennessee.

Michelle Wentz, (RD; LDN; CSSD; MS-DI, 2006) recently accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition Science at East Carolina Univ.

Inbal Guelmann-Mizrahi (BS, 2011) has been accepted into the master’s program for nutritional studies at Hebrew University in Israel. After completion of that two-year program, she will enroll in a six-month internship in order to become a Registered Dietitian in Israel. Inbal said, “Thank you to the program at UF for preparing me!”

Amelia Greco (BS, 2012) recently accepted an entry-level position as a Junior Food Scientist at The Father’s Table in Sanford, Florida.

Tim Buran (MS, 2012) is a Product Developer for Kraft in Chicago. He is currently working in the Canadian Cheese & Dairy Group, leading innovation efforts for Kraft Canada.

Rachel Glintz (BS, 2012) is attending nursing school at the Univ. of Miami.

Yvette Morlote (BS, 2012) is attending nursing school at the Univ. of Miami.

Jamie Stolarz (RD; BS, 2009; MS-DI, 2011) is the first ever in-store Registered Dietitian to be hired by Publix Supermarkets.

2012 BS graduates accepted to pharmacy schools include: Adria Anguita (Nova Southeastern Univ), Rachel Bernatsky (State Univ of NY), Angel Diamantakos (Nova Southeastern Univ), Julie Mathew (Nova Southeastern Univ), Ashley Noble (Nova Southeastern Univ), and Caleb St. Jean (Nova Southeastern Univ).

Laura Medina (BS, 2012) is a Customer Support Specialist with D. D. Williamson in Louisville, Kentucky.
Jessica (McIntire) Kerensky (RD; PA-C; BS, 2005; MS-DI, 2007) completed her education and training as a Physician Assistant and now works in the Emergency Department at Shands UF.

Lucette Talamas (BS, 2009) is a Registered Dietitian with Baptist Health South Florida’s Community Health Department. Her responsibilities include composing and presenting nutrition programs in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.

Jennifer Chu (BS, 2012) is pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy at Florida International Univ.

Scott Gereffi (BS, 2012) was admitted to the FSHN Master of Science program in food science, and began his graduate work this fall.

2012 BS graduates accepted into dietetic internships include: Kelsey Baizan (Bay Pines); Anna Busby (Florida State Univ.); Krista Dulkowski (Andrews Univ.); Ashley Hamm (UF); Kelly Masteller (Univ. of Iowa); Leda Medina (South Carolina Dept of Health); Brandee Monarch (Andrews Univ.); Caitlin Murphy (South Carolina Dept of Health); Eshani Persaud (UF); Simone Pierson (Univ. of Houston); Stefanie Rivera (Univ. of North Florida); Deanna Shade (Univ. of Georgia); Tiffany Stodtko (UF); Andrea Taufer (Andrews Univ.); and Kylie Tresher (Andrews Univ.).

Fabiola Accomando (BS, 2012) was accepted into the MS program in Medical Science at the Univ. of South Florida.

Daniel Barber (BS, 2012) was accepted into the UF MS program in leadership development in the UF Agricultural Education and Communication Department.

Kyra Catabay (BS, 2012) was accepted into the MS program in Health Education & Behavior at UF.

Amanda Pegg (BS, 2012) is pursuing a master’s degree in Food Science at Mississippi State Univ.

Kimberly Stalker (BS, 2012) was admitted to the MS program in science education through UF’s College of Education.

Ashley Wilson (BS, 2012) was accepted into the Columbia University Teachers College MS program in applied physiology and nutrition.

Brandon Willingham (BS, 2012) is pursuing a master’s degree in nutritional science at Auburn Univ.

Sonia Garza (RD; LDN; CDE; MS-DI, 2008) works as a Diabetes Educator in Texas.

Melanie (Grabianowski) Savoca (RD; LDN; MS-DI, 2007) recently authored a chapter on cardiology in the Handbook of Pediatric Nutrition. Melanie is a clinical dietitian at the Children’s Hospital of Pennsylvania.

Patrick Van Asch (BS, 2012) is studying nutrition and food science in the MS program at the Univ. of Rhode Island.

Congratulations!

Changae “April” Kim (MS, 2011) and her husband Young Kim (UF MS in Materials Science & Engineering, 2010) welcomed baby boy Timothy Hayool Kim on October 26.

Aman Sandhu (PhD candidate) and her husband Dr. Milap Sandhu (UF PT PhD, 2010) welcomed baby boy Armaan Singh Sandhu on October 5.


Sarah (Glenny) Schmidt (BS, 2011; MS-DI Student) married Caleb Schmidt this past August, and the couple honeymooned in the Bahamas.

Jennifer (Marquez) Lentzke (RD; LD; MS-DI, 2010) married Jason Lentzke this past summer. They are both competitive triathletes, and she has also launched her own business: TORO Performance Nutrition, LLC, in Austin, Texas, for which she serves as founder and CEO.

While completing her MS at the Univ. of North Florida, Lindsay Raub (RDE; BS, 2011) was awarded the 2012 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Pediatric Dietetics Practice Group Scholarship. Lindsay is now a clinical dietitian with the Department of Pediatrics (Division of Genetics/Metabolics) at Shands UF.

Meghan (Murphy) Van Camp (RD; LDN; BS, 2001) received the Florida Dietetic Association Emerging Leader Award (July 2012). Meghan is a renal dietitian for the Univ. of Central Florida Wellness & Health Promotion Services.

Doretta (Ho) Leung (RD; LDN; BS, 2005; MS-DI, 2009) married Danny Leung in February of this year. Doretta is the Supervisor of the Clay County, Florida WIC program.


Did we leave you out, or is our information outdated? Please send us your career updates and other announcements (information on page 2).
Nutrition Study Examines Role of Probiotics in Students’ Health

Michelle Jackson, a sophomore Journalism major at UF, was kind enough to let us reprint a news article she wrote this fall about FSHN. Thank you, Michelle, for your generosity!

Runny noses, tissue boxes, sniffles, and coughs are all key signs that flu season has arrived. However, they may also indicate that final exams are approaching. A research study within the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department at the University of Florida is investigating whether a probiotic can reduce stress and keep students from getting sick during final exams.

Anxiety and stress are the most frequently encountered problems at the UF Counseling & Wellness Center, said Clinical Assistant Professor Dr. Clark Slagle. Many students coming into UF are not prepared for the demands placed on them. This stress manifests itself in a variety of ways.

“I think one of the biggest ways is just in mood,” Slagle said. “Students will notice that they’re just not getting any enjoyment out of what they’re doing, and they’ve taken on more than they’re able to manage.”

In the United States there is an emphasis on physical health, but people put off taking care of mental health, Slagle said. However, what goes on emotionally and intellectually has a huge impact on one’s physical being. “If we’re not taking care of one part of ourselves it’s going to impact other pieces of us, and I think that ties into the overall picture of people getting so busy that they let parts of their lives go that they just don’t have time to take care of,” Slagle said.

One way to maintain health during times of academic stress may be consuming a probiotic. A probiotic helps maintain a healthy balance of good bacteria in the digestive tract. This study is examining whether students who consume a probiotic during high-stress times and cold and flu season have fewer days with cold and flu symptoms than students who do not take probiotics, said Study Coordinator Amanda Ford.

The principal investigator of the study, Dr. Bobbi Langkamp-Henken, observed in a previous study that…

Hurricane, from page 1

…power loss for much of the city. Dr. Guo said he decided to share with us his own Hurricane Sandy story after receiving many phone calls from friends, many of whom he met while attending UF, checking to make sure that he was okay and that his research hadn’t been compromised. This is what he told us:

“Located right at the East River’s edge in Manhattan, NYU Medical Center was flooded by surge water that may have reached nearly 14 feet in height, which was really unprecedented. This sudden flooding sent the emergency generators into action, but just two hours later the power went out. Three hundred patients were urgently evacuated over the course of 13 hours in the midst of the raging storm.

This is something I have never experienced in my life! The buildings lost both their power and water supply, and every instrument stopped running. All the samples and specimens in the freezers were thawing out. We had to immediately carry the most precious samples to emergency freezers, and transport other crucial samples to freezers located in adjacent institutions. Then, we spent hours hauling heavy loads of dry ice and liquid nitrogen up many flights of stairs to keep the freezers cold and the frozen samples safe. During that time we faced many difficult challenges head on, but we worked together and made every effort to resume our research.

I also witnessed all kinds of help from outside the Medical Center, including assistance from President Obama, FEMA, NIH, the city of New York, and even former students and staff from Tulane University Medical Center who had lived through Hurricane Katrina. They shared their experiences, recounted lessons learned, and told their stories of courage and recovery.

Since then, everything we fought so hard for has gotten back on track. Although I lost some individual research work, I grew and learned how to face a crisis, deal with a difficult situation, and work even harder to bounce back from tough times.”

Dr. Guo is happy about his choice to attend UF FSHN for his doctorate in Nutritional Sciences. He said, “What I liked best were the people at FSHN – the diversity and dynamics. And their genuineness and willingness to help were unforgettable. I miss everyone and the time I spent at FSHN is such a great memory for me.”

A special thank you to Dr. Guo for sharing his career experiences and also his Hurricane Sandy story with us. We wish him all the best in his career and other future endeavors!
Spotlight on FSHN’s Newest Faculty Members

Dr. Soohyoun Ahn (Assistant Professor) joined FSHN in December, 2011. She received both her BS and MS in Food Science & Biotechnology from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, and her PhD in Food Science & Technology from Cornell University. Dr. Ahn’s research interests include development of rapid, cost-effective, and practical assays for the simultaneous detection of multiple pathogens and toxins in food and the environment. Additionally, she hopes to build a small, portable microfluidic platform for use in field assays. Dr. Ahn will teach FOS4731 Government Regulations and the Food Industry and FOS5732 Current Issues in Food Regulations.

Dr. Soonkyu Chung (Assistant Professor) came to FSHN in December, 2010. After earning her BS and MS in Agricultural Chemistry from Seoul National University in Korea, she went on to earn a PhD in Nutrition from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Most recently, Dr. Chung was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Wake Forest School of Medicine, in Pathology and Lipid Science. Her research focuses on lipid metabolism, including regulation of gut microbiota and its impact on pathogenesis of obesity and insulin resistance. Dr. Chung will teach HUN6301 Nutritional Aspects of Lipids and HUN6305 Nutritional Aspects of Carbohydrates.

Dr. Paul Sarnoski (Assistant Professor) joined FSHN in June 2012. He received his BA in Chemistry from Wilkes University and his MS and PhD in Food Science & Technology from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Before relocating to Florida, Dr. Sarnoski was a Food Technologist with the USDA-ARS in Hilo, Hawaii. His areas of expertise are in food chemistry and food analysis, and he will focus his research efforts on aquatic food products. More specifically, he is interested in the application of instrumental techniques like spectroscopy and chromatography to solve problems in food science. Dr. Sarnoski will teach FOS4311 Food Chemistry and its corresponding laboratory.

Food Safety, Professional Connections, and Giant Peanuts

FSHN faculty and graduate students presented cutting edge scientific research and also attended a variety of professional symposia and workshops at the 2012 International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) meeting in Providence, Rhode Island in July.

Congratulations go out to the Florida Association for Food Protection (FAFP) for winning two of the five affiliate awards at the meeting: the C.B Shogren Memorial Award for demonstrating overall achievement in promoting the mission of IAFP, and the Best Affiliate Overall Meeting Award. They received these honors, in part, due to FAFP’s involvement with UF students.

In addition to being a Past-President of FAFP, our own Dr. Michelle Danyluk (Assistant Professor) is recognized throughout IAFP for another reason: she plays “the peanut” in FAFP’s always hilarious and much-anticipated annual food safety skit!

Give a gift to the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition!

Your donation to FSHN can be used to support student travel to conferences, scholarships, and assistantships; to support the purchase of new equipment to keep us up-to-date; and to provide important resources to support other facilities within the FSHN building, including our Pilot Plant and clinical nutrition facilities.

You can give online at: https://www.ufl.edu/OnlineGiving/Campaign/FundDetail.asp?FundCode=001075

Or if you prefer, you can send a check (made out to “U of FL-SHARE”) to:

Attn: Dr. Sue Percival, Interim Chair, Food Science and Human Nutrition, PO Box 110370, Gainesville, FL 32611-0370
Caught in the Act

Send us your photos of FSHN alumni and friends at work or at play! Contact information is located on page 2.

Probiotics, from page 4

…the number of students with cold and flu symptoms increased during final exams, Ford said. This study will examine the role of probiotics in keeping students healthy during times of high stress. “Generally stress is understood as pro-inflammatory, so you get sick more often if you’re stressed more often,” said Study Coordinator Abdulah Hanifi.

Participants will complete weekly questionnaires about their digestive health, level of physical activity, and quality of life, which includes symptoms such as a sore throat, fever, and runny nose, Hanifi said. This will allow the researchers to evaluate the impact the probiotics have on an individual’s general health.

“The way you would see it is them feeling more healthy rather than unhealthy,” Hanifi said. The questionnaire will reveal whether participants report having lower stress. If so, they will investigate whether it is related to the immune system’s response and if it results in feeling healthier.

The researchers expect to also see a boost in immune strength in the participants, Hanifi said. They will monitor this by collecting saliva samples from students before and after taking the probiotic and seeing if they show characteristics of increased activity from infection-fighting agents. If the students report feeling healthy and display evidence of a stronger immune system, the results can be attributed to the probiotic.

The study began November 6. Participants were randomly assigned either one of three types of probiotics or a placebo, which they took daily for six weeks, Ford said. They needed 580 participants for the study, but could accept up to 700.

According to the UF Student Health Center consent form, an individual could earn up to $80 for his or her participation: $10 for completing seven weekly questionnaires and $5 for two saliva samples. Participants had to be healthy, full-time undergraduate students, 18 years of age or older, and taking at least one final exam during the fall semester.

According to the consent form, no serious side effects have been reported due to the probiotics used in the study. However, during times of academic stress individuals tend to exhibit cold symptoms. By taking the probiotic, one may be able to lessen these symptoms that accompany stressful times such as final exam week.

“It’s not like students are neglecting themselves on purpose,” Slagle said. “It’s just they’re kind of stuck in what they’re doing, and it’s hard to find the time and energy to take care of themselves.”
The FSHN Department organized the 8th “Florida Party” in conjunction with the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Annual Meeting this July in Las Vegas. The party was held at Cabo Wabo Cantina and co-hosted by Florida Section IFT. It brought together faculty, students, alumni, and friends to enjoy free food, drinks, Gator goodies, and networking. A very special thank you to our generous sponsors: Sun Orchard, Checkers, ABC Research, the Burdock Group, FL Section IFT, the FSHN Department Taste Panel, Darifair, Coca-Cola, Chr Hansen, Bell Flavors, DSM, and Sensient. Please enjoy these photos taken at the Florida Party and on the Expo floor, and we’ll see you next year in Chicago!
FSHN Achievements

Dr. Liwei Gu (Assistant Professor) won one of two 2012 Richard L. Jones New Faculty Research Awards from the UF Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences. This was in recognition of his outstanding research program, which focuses on three main areas: the chemistry and antioxidant capacities of phytochemicals in foods, phytochemical bioavailability and efficacy in preventing chronic diseases, and nanotechnology in food and nutritional sciences.

Aman Sandhu (PhD Candidate) won the D. Glynn Davies/Juice Products Association Scholarship and the FL Section Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Ronald H. Schmidt Professional Service Graduate Scholarship. Haiyan “Olivia” Liu (MS, 2011; PhD Student) received the FL Section IFT Graduate Scholarship. And Tim Buran (MS, 2012) won a William L. and Agnes F. Brown Graduate Scholarship.

This November, FSHN PhD Candidates Cheryl Rock (working with Dr. Wade Yang, Assistant Professor) and Aman Sandhu (working with Dr. Liwei Gu, Assistant Professor) were selected to receive two of the four annual College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Outstanding International Graduate Student Awards. Their selection was based not only on their exceptional academic and research accomplishments, but also on their dedication to campus and community service.

Lauren Headrick (MS-DI, 2012) was selected as the Outstanding Dietetics Student by the Florida Dietetic Association for the state of Florida in July of this year, while she was completing her graduate program. Lauren now works as a clinical dietitian at Shands UF.

Thao Nguyen (BS, 2010; MS, 2012), who is currently a Professional Intern with Magic Kingdom Safety Services at the Walt Disney World Parks and Resorts Safety Services, placed 1st in the Florida State Horticultural Society Student Best Oral Presentation Competition at the 2012 Annual Meeting in Delray Beach, FL. Her presentation was entitled: “Fate of Escherichia coli O157:H7 and Salmonella on Full Ripe and Three-quarter Ripe Strawberries.” Thao also received a Florida Association for Food Protection (FAFP) travel scholarship to attend the 2012 International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) meeting.

Angela Valadez (PhD Student) won the national IFT Extension Education Scholarship for the second year in a row, and also received a FAFP travel scholarships to attend the IAFP annual meeting this past summer in Providence, Rhode Island. Angela also attended FoodMicro12 in Istanbul, Turkey where she presented a poster entitled: “The Fate of Salmonella in Foliar Fertilization Solutions in Groundwater under Different Storage Temperatures.”

Yan Lu (PhD Candidate) spent three months this past summer doing dissertation-related research in the Iron Metabolism Laboratory at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research in Brisbane, Australia. In the picture on the left, Yan is spending quality time with a koala bear. On the right, Yan is standing with laboratory head Dr. Greg Anderson, a world-renowned expert in iron research and President-Elect for the International BioIron Society.

For the second year in a row, Dr. Charlie Sims (Professor) led a group of students to Italy to learn about food and agriculture. The three-week trip started in Sicily, where students saw the production of pistachios, pasta, olive oil, cheese, wine, and sea salt and also got to visit Mt. Etna and swim in the Mediterranean Sea. Next, the group flew north for sightseeing in Venice and tours of an apple farm and a brewery in Bolzano. While in the Bologna area, students toured a winery, visited the University of Bologna, and observed the production of many classical Italian foods such as Lambrusco wines, Parma ham, balsamic vinegar, and espresso coffee. In Tuscany, the group toured several wineries and visited Florence and Siena. The final stop was Rome, where the group enjoyed a free day of sight-seeing and a last meal together. Student participants were: Elizabeth Akselrud (NUT Junior), Karli Bailey (Food/Resource Econ Junior), Kent Burchill (Biology Senior), Kristin DiGioia (NUT Senior), Taylor Dole (FOS Senior), Amanda Dunham (NUT Junior), Austin Gerber (BS, 2012 in Food/Resource Econ), Dayna Gewolb (DIE Senior), Chelsea Groelle (Psychology Senior), Brayleah Kernan (Comm Sci/Disorders Senior) Megan Messina (DIE Senior), Jade Parry (DIE Junior), Hannah Rigatti (Psychology Sophomore), Carley Rusch (DIE Junior), Mackenzie Sims (ChemE Sophomore), Jonathan Sims (FOS Junior), and Kiara Singer (Biology Junior).