Two new faculty members joined the Department this fall. Hiromi Gunshin is an Assistant Professor of Nutrition, with research interests in iron metabolism, anemia, and iron overload. Dr. Gunshin received her M.S. in Nutritional Biochemistry from Hiroshima University and Ph.D. in Nutritional Biochemistry from the University of Tokyo. She is setting up a cell culture facility in the Department, and will utilize knockout mice to examine iron’s roles in different tissues. David Nyachuba joined our group in October as the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program Food Safety Education Director, replacing Rita Brennan Olson, who had provided excellent and innovative service in this role for over ten years. He received his M.S. in Food Science & Technology from the University of Ghent (Belgium), and has recently completed his Ph.D. in Food Microbiology from the University of Vermont, with research on the control of Listeria monocytogenes in foods. We are continuing our search for an assistant professor of Nutrition to begin in September, 2007, with research focus to include nutrition’s role in obesity or chronic disease prevention, or other applied areas.

The Department of Nutrition has received a $90,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to fund the Nutrition Multicultural Scholarship Program, which will provide five undergraduate students with scholarships of $6,000 per year for three years of study leading to a bachelor’s of science degree in nutrition. The effort, dubbed HANDS (Health and Nutrition Diversity Scholars), is being run by Professor Nancy Cohen, along with Pamela Marsh-Williams, assistant provost and dean for the Undergraduate Advising and Academic Support Center (UAASC) and director of Pre-Major Advising Services, and Mathew L. Ouellett, director of the Center for Teaching. The HANDS program is designed to recruit, retain, mentor and train scholars from diverse backgrounds who are underrepresented in the
field of nutrition. Special features of the program will include a scholars' seminar, a one-credit course aimed at developing social support, mentorship and professional preparation through research projects and community service projects; a peer tutoring system where senior nutrition majors provide tutoring in math, science, nutrition and other courses; finding community mentors who are nutrition practitioners or researchers in the field; and giving participants the opportunity to serve as mentors to first-year students. The overall goal of HANDS is to build the capacity of students to study and practice nutrition in diverse settings and communities nationally and globally.

The UMass-Amherst campus has initiated a process of benchmarking our research productivity with other excellent research universities. As part of this process, the Department of Nutrition has collected indicator data from six peer nutrition departments throughout the U.S. With approximately 120 undergraduate majors and 18 graduate students, the Nutrition Department is among the largest 1/3 in the U.S., and is comparable to our national peers when adjusted for the size of the university. Results from the 2004-5 year indicate that our grant expenditures are double those of our peers. At the same time, the number of publications and grants per faculty member are on par with our highly-productive peers, approximately 2.4 and 2.8 per person, respectively. We will continue to chart these indicators, and look forward to continued growth and excellence.

With over $2.7 million of annual grant/contract expenditures, the Department of Nutrition is once again the leading department on campus in grant/contract expenditures per faculty member – almost $680,000 per faculty member in 2005. In addition to ongoing grants and contracts, our faculty and staff were principal or co-investigators in several new grants and contracts awarded in the past year, including the following:

DiChiro, G (PI), Carbone E (Co-I). Pioneer Valley/Hampden County Community Environmental Health Network ‘CARE’ project. EPA Level 1 Cooperative Agreement. 8/1/06-7/31/08, $100,000.

Kim Y-C (PI), Regulation of fat cell differentiation and gene expression. UMass Faculty Research Grant, 6/1/06 – 5/31/07, $28,500.

Kim, Y-C. Regulation of Adipocyte Differentiation and Lipid Metabolism. USDA Hatch Project, 8/30/06-9/30/09.

Cohen, N. (PI), Marsh-Williams, P. and Ouellett, M. (coinvestigators). UMass Amherst Multicultural Nutrition Scholarship Program. USDA CSREES, 1/01/06 – 12/31/10, $90,000.

Pivarnik, L. (PI), Carbone, E. (PI of subcontract). Food Safety Education for High School and Transition Special Needs Students. USDA CSREES, 10/1/05-9/30/08, $590,439 (total) $96,826 (subcontract).
**Out and About ~ Professional Presentations**

Elena Carbone and Rita Brennan Olson presented their work on, “Examining the Food Manager Certification Exam for School Food Service Personnel” at the 5th Conference of the International Test Commission, in Brussels, Belgium in July. Also in July, research on diet and environmental contaminants in peri-pubertal Russian boys from Alayne Ronnenberg and collaborators was presented at the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology annual meeting in Paris, France.

Patsy Beffa-Negrini and Nancy Cohen attended the First World Congress of Public Health Nutrition in Barcelona, Spain in September, 2006, with poster presentations entitled, “Fats and Health: An Accessible, Low-Cost, Effective Approach to Online Professional Development in Nutrition” and “Satisfaction with Interactive Web-Based Nutrition and Food Safety Education for Dietitians, K-12 Teachers and Health Professionals Using UMassONE.”

Young-Cheul Kim was a collaborator on a paper discussing the antioxidant effects of olive oil extracts presented at the International Symposium and Annual Meeting of the Korean Society of Food Science and Nutrition in October, 2006, in Gyeongju, Korea.

Jean Anliker attended the National EFNEP and Board of Human Sciences Meetings in Washington, DC in March, and presented three talks on obesity and food security, best practices in EFNEP, and the new UMass Extension nutrition curriculum, CHOICES: Steps Toward Health. Dr. Anliker was in Arlington, Virginia in September at the USDA/Food and Nutrition Service National Nutrition Education Conference, presenting, “Making a Difference on Nutrition and Fitness for Native Americans.”

In April, two faculty members were in San Francisco at the Experimental Biology/American Society for Nutrition Annual Meeting. Young-Cheul Kim and colleagues presented work on daidzein stimulation of glucose uptake in adipocytes, and Nancy Cohen co-moderated a session on obesity from professional, public, and policy perspectives.

In June, Elena Carbone and Rita Brennan Olson presented a poster on "Examining the Food Manager Certification Exam for School Food Service Personnel: Reflections from the Field" at the National Environmental Health Association Conference in San Antonio, Texas. Jean Anliker and Elena Carbone were also in Texas in May, presenting work on their project, “Tween POWER: Preventing Obesity through Wise Expenditures of Resources”, at the USDA/CSREES National Research Initiative annual grantee meeting in Houston. Formative
research from the Tween POWER project was also presented by Drs. Carbone and Anliker at the CYFAR Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, in May.

Nancy Cohen and Lynne McLandsborough traveled to Washington, DC in June to present, “Food Safety FIRST: Online Education for Science Teachers” to the USDA Food Safety Project Directors Meeting.

Sophia Zagarins, a doctoral student in epidemiology, presented work with Alayne Ronnenberg and UMass epidemiology professors Bertone-Johnson and Chasan-Taber at the Society for Epidemiologic Research and Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology conferences in Seattle, Washington, in June. Papers included, “Correlates of Prenatal Micronutrient Intake among Hispanic Women” and “Lifestyle Factors and Prenatal Micronutrient Intake Among Hispanic Women.”

Patsy Beffa-Negrini and Nancy Cohen were at the Society for Nutrition Education annual conference in San Francisco in July, presenting their work on online food safety education for teachers with coauthors Mary Jane Laus and Rita Brennan Olson, and on the development and evaluation of an interactive online seminar for nutrition professionals with diverse learning styles, with coauthors Elena Carbone and Mary Jane Laus.

In August, collaborative work by Young-Cheul Kim and colleagues on mercury bioavailability was presented at the 8th International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant, in Madison, Wisconsin. Dr. Kim was also a coauthor on a second paper addressing the impact of phytochemicals on methylmercury bioaccessibility at the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida in June.

Young-Cheul Kim provided two talks describing his research to the UMass Department of Food Science and Department of Kinesiology in October and November, 2005.

Elena Carbone was in Holyoke discussing her Puerto Rican Studies Seminar Experience with the Five Colleges and Holyoke community in April, 2006. She was also in Holyoke providing a presentation to the Puerto Rican Studies Seminar participants on Community Service Learning in May.

Jean Anliker and Elena Carbone described their research on “Teen Obesity: Battling Childhood Obesity by Using Dollars and Sense” to the Food Science Strategic Research Alliance, in Amherst, in May.

Elena Carbone was in Westborough, MA, in June, providing the keynote presentation at the School Nutrition Association’s annual meeting, on “Connecting Learning with Life Experience: An Introduction to Adult Learning”.

Regional and Local

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Regional and Local

Elena Carbone
Young-Cheul Kim participated in a Collaborative Symposium between UMass, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, and MATFORSK (Norwegian Food Institute) organized by Dr. Kalidas Shetty in the Department of Food Science in October.

Congratulations to Elena Carbone, who was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in June.

Jean Anliker and the Extension Nutrition Education Program (NEP) team, including Lynne Thompson, Cindy Hubbard, and Ana Rona, were awarded national first place winner for their nutrition newsletter, Pumpkin Post and Banana Beat, by the 2006 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Awards program. Dr. Anliker and the NEP team were also awarded the Northeast Extension Directors 2005 Award of Excellence for their work on the curriculum, CHOICES: Steps Toward Health.

Nancy Cohen received the UMass President’s 2005 Public Service Award in December. As one of seven recipients from the five UMass campuses, Cohen was cited for “her ability to create synergies between teaching, research, and public service and for bringing nutrition theory and research into the public domain in a clear, concise, and easily understood manner throughout the Commonwealth”.

Congratulations to Pat Bebo, Extension Educator in Fall River, who was elected President-elect of the Massachusetts Dietetic Association.

Kudos to Andrea Gulezian, Extension Educator in Brockton, who was elected as the Massachusetts liaison-elect to the American Dietetic Association Council on Practice and Area Associations, and as chair of the Massachusetts Dietetic Association Nominating Committee.

Congratulations, too, to the 2006 Virginia A. Beal scholarship winners Laura Hutchinson and Alison Wight, Helen S. Mitchell scholarship winners Ujjwala Dandekar and Jessica Maillet, and the Peter L. Pellett scholarship awardee, Jennifer Wallinger.

Congratulations to all!

Several new publications were produced by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program (NEP) in 2005-6, including:

Brennan Olson, R., Treu, J., Cohen, N., Thompson, L., Millett, K. It’s More than a Meal Adult Day Health Nutrition Manual, a manual for Adult Day Health staff and caregivers, including


This fall, our Department website has a new look and expanded information! Visit www.umass.edu/sphhs/nutrition to learn more about our academic programs, research, and outreach projects. Our Online Nutrition Education for Professionals programs can also be accessed from www.umassONE.net. Noncredit courses include: Current Topics in Fats and Health, Fitting Fats into a Healthy Lifestyle, and Food Safety FIRST. We also offer Nutrition for a Healthy Lifestyle, Weight Management, and Nutrition in the Science Classroom for credit, and a Cyberseminar on Omega-3 Fatty Acids.

The Department has submitted a minigrant for converting our Masters in Public Health Nutrition into a completely online degree program. We are currently planning the curriculum, and estimate that the program will begin receiving applications late in the Spring semester.

The 2006 Virginia A. Beal Lecture and Dinner was held on April 26, focusing on the non-bone functions of vitamin D, along with current recommendations for vitamin D intake. Our featured speakers were Dr. Bruce Hollis of the Medical University of South Carolina, and Dr. Susan Harris of the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center at Tufts. Save the date of April 25 for the 2007 Beal Lecture and Dinner. The upcoming program will address the changing nutrition needs of the rapidly growing population of older adults. Further details will be posted on our website in the near future.

Two all-day training programs for Extension NEP staff were held in 2006: Scaling MyPyramid One Step at a Time was held in Worcester, MA in the fall, and Making Sense of Science in a Nonsense World was held in Westborough, MA in the spring.
STUDENT NEWS

Under the sponsorship of Young-Cheul Kim, Catherine Vincent, a junior Commonwealth College student, received a Commonwealth College Research Assistant Fellowship ($1,000) in 2005. The purpose of her study was to determine the effects of soy isoflavones on fat cell differentiation and diabetes. Jeff Sautter, a senior Commonwealth College student working with Alayne Ronnenberg and Barry Braun (Kinesiology), received a Commonwealth College Research Assistant Fellowship ($1,000) in 2006. The purpose of his study was to determine the effects of meal timing surrounding a bout of exercise on the adipoinsular axis.

The UMass Nutrition Association (UMNA) had another busy year. Under the direction of Elena Carbone and Sara Sabelawski, UMNA students provided nutrition talks in the dormitories, participated in the fall open house and Majors fairs, and sponsored a healthy food drive, as well as assisted the Western Area Massachusetts Dietetics Association (WAMDA) in conducting the annual WAMDA road race.

Under the guidance of Intern Director Nadine Braunstein, the UMass Dietetic Internship has expanded its placement sites, enabling ten interns to complete their practical experience with us in 2006-7.

IN THE NEWS

Nancy Cohen was interviewed twice by the Springfield Republican last year, discussing kosher meats and food safety, and sodium and health. Dr. Cohen was also interviewed by the Daily Hampshire Gazette, addressing fruit and vegetable safety. Alayne Ronnenberg and Sara Sabelawski also provided information to the Daily Hampshire Gazette in a story about hydration. Alayne Ronnenberg and Nancy Cohen were featured in two WebMD presentations in May, addressing using the new Food Pyramid and the food label to improve dietary habits.

PEOPLE

With a workforce of about forty state and field staff members, the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program had several staffing changes in 2005-6, including the following: Kirsten Johnson resigned as the Extension Family Nutrition Program Project Leader in Boston, and Tracie Gillespie from the Boston office was promoted to Project Leader. NEP bid farewell to Glenys Hernandez, Donna Lampson, Kristin Lefebvre, and Melanie Beach from the field offices, and welcomed Donere Williams, Angela Brown, Ashley Newcomb, Lori Baker, Luz Ocampo, and Elizabeth Dewey to the NEP field staff.

Oh-Kwan Lee joined the Department as a post-doctoral researcher. He will be working with Young-Cheul Kim investigating nutritional effects on adipocytes (fat cells).

From September to November of 2005, Elena Carbone coordinated a charitable donation drive for members of the Global Learning Partners (GLP) community affected by hurricane Katrina. More than $2,200 was raised, as well as donations of food, clothing and other support.


We are once again grateful for the many generous gifts directed to the Department of Nutrition this year. This support has enabled us to continue to improve space for student work, upgrade student computers, provide funds for students to attend conferences, and offer scholarships, fellowships and special programs.

Many thanks to the following donors this past year:

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