

A MESSAGE FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

February 2007

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments



On February 13, a number of Rutgers faculty and staff gathered to discuss the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report, released earlier this month. The event, titled "Global Warming: It's later than we think; but it's not too late!" featured presentations by **Alan Robock, Tony Broccoli, Paul Falkowski, and Kevin Lyons**. Following the presentations, **Yair Rosenthal** moderated a question-and-answer session. (Photo: Paul Falkowski gives his talk, "The way forward for our nation.")

Ilya Raskin, professor of plant science, led a delegation including Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment Director **Gerben Zylstra** (Biochemistry and Microbiology), WellGen scientist Slavik Dushenkov, and University of Illinois professor Mary Ann Lila to Central Asia January 20–31. The goal of the trip was to explore the possibility of adding scientists from Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to the Biotech Center's Central Asia International Cooperative Biodiversity Group funded by NIH. The team met with a variety of botanists, chemists, and microbiologists and they hope to work out research agreements in the near future.

Gerben Zylstra hosted a visit by two new teachers from the Monmouth County Biotechnology High School in Freehold. David Fusco and Shawn Cyran were hired as advanced biotechnology teachers last fall. The goal of the visit was to discuss ways in which the Biotech Center can help with curriculum, summer internships for advanced students, and student research projects.

Professor **Max Häggblom** (Biochemistry and Microbiology) was at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, January 8–12 to teach a one-week course on biodegradation and bioremediation. This course is part of the university's graduate program in biological and environmental sciences.

Professor **John Worobey's** (Nutritional Sciences) book, *Nutrition & Behavior: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, will be displayed at the Fourth Annual Libraries' "Celebration of Recently Published Faculty Authors" Exhibition and Reception. The event, which will take place Tuesday, March 20, from 5–7 p.m. in the lobby of Alexander Library, honors faculty from Rutgers–New Brunswick who have published books during the 2006 calendar year. All faculty are invited to celebrate their colleagues.

Peter Morin, professor (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources) visited The Netherlands from January 23 to February 1 to present three invited seminars and to participate in graduate classes and meetings. He presented a seminar to the Animal Ecology group at the University of Leiden, titled "Experimental Studies of Community Ecology—Linking Dynamics and Structure." On January 25, he presented an invited lecture in the SEE series sponsored by the Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics at the University of Amsterdam, and on January 26, Morin participated in a "master class" for ecology graduate students at the University of Amsterdam. He also presented the honorary lecture at the Verweij meeting of the Functional Ecology Graduate School (of the Netherlands, in Lunteren), which took place January 29–31. Graduate Schools are organized around thematic topics in the Netherlands, and seven universities participate in the Functional Ecology Graduate School.

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Steven Handel, professor (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources), was interviewed, along with John McLaughlin, the Department of Environmental Protection's director of ecological services, for the nationally broadcast news program "All Things Considered" on National Public Radio. The interview focused on projects to turn landfills into woodlands. The interview transcript and MP3 can be found [here](#).

Tony Broccoli, associate professor (Environmental Sciences), was the subject of a live interview about the relationship between recent unusual weather and climate change on WNBC-TV (New York, NY) during the "Live at Five" broadcast on January 5. Later in the month, Broccoli was a panel discussion participant in the NJN (Trenton, NJ) television documentary entitled "Drought and Deluge—The New Weather," which first aired on January 15.

Alan Robock and **Luke Oman**, both of the Department of Environmental Sciences, are quoted in *Science News*' February 3, 2007, cover story. The article can be found [here](#).

Student Activities and Accomplishments

Animal Sciences graduate student **Jim Lechner** was featured in a January 11 NJN segment on Goat World, the largest Boer goat farm in New Jersey. Links to several related newspaper articles can be found [here](#).

Mohamed Najjar, **Katherine Nolen**, **Linda Rosenberg**, **Yumin You**, and **Xuntao Zhu**, all graduate students in Food Science, received \$1,500 scholarships at the New York Institute of Food Technologists and the Central New Jersey Subsection's Rutgers Night event, held February 13. Several students were also recognized for their excellent poster presentations: Xuntao Zhu (1st place honors), Mohamed Najjar (2nd place honors), Yumin You (2nd place honors), and **Kasi Sundaresan** (3rd place honors).

Cindy Puzio, an undergraduate working in **Jason Grabosky**'s Urban Forestry lab, received an at-large student scholarship for \$1,000 from the Bartlett Tree Foundation. These scholarships are given to four students in arboriculture/urban forestry who have a genuine interest in a career in arboriculture.

Alex Felson, a Ph.D. candidate in **Steward Pickett**'s (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources) lab, is leading the design for the development of a master plan for the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries.

Grants and Fundraising Efforts

Jozef Kokini, professor in the Department of Food Science (PI), **Rieks Bruins**, assistant director of the Center for Advanced Food Technology (CAFT), and **William Franke**, associate director of CAFT (co-PIs) were awarded a contract for \$322,000 from the U.S. Department of Defense for 24 months.

Faculty of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences received six of the 20 Academic Excellence Fund (AEF) awarded for 2006–07. **Ying Fan Reinfelder** (Departments of Environmental Sciences and Geological Sciences), received \$51,000 for "Global Wetland Distribution and Climate Change: A Seed Project." **Ilya Raskin** (Plant Biology and Pathology), **Gerben Zylstra** (Biochemistry and Microbiology), and **Jim White** (Plant Biology and Pathology) received \$65,000 for "Expanding Pharmacological Screening Capabilities of the Global Institute for Bioexploration (GIBEX)." **Carl Pray** (Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics), along with **David Finegold** (dean of the School of



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Management and Labor) and **Clinton Andrews** (Program in Urban Planning and Policy Development) received \$50,000 to create the Rutgers Center for Innovation Studies. **Scott Glenn**, **Oscar Schofield** (both of the Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences), **Manish Parashar** (Electrical and Computer Engineering) and **Dimitris Metaxas** (Computer Science and Biomedical Engineering) received \$140,000 for “The Pervasive Dynamic Cyber-physical Ecosystem.” **Paul Falkowski** (Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences) received \$250,000 to establish the Rutgers University Energy Institute. **Joan Bennett** (Plant Biology and Pathology; associate vice president for the promotion of women in science, engineering, and mathematics), along with **Eileen Appelbaum** (director of the Center for Women and Work), **Teresa M. Boyer** (director, Education and Workforce Development Research Programs), **Nancy DiTomaso** (Organizational Management; Rutgers Business School), **David Finegold** (dean of the School of Management and Labor), and **Mary S. Hartman** (director of the Institute for Women’s Leadership) received \$50,000 for “A leadership program at Rutgers University for women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions.”

Lily Young (Environmental Sciences) is the PI on a multidisciplinary preproposal to the National Science Foundation’s Partnerships for International Research program. The preproposal, titled “Stable Isotope Geochemistry and Contaminant Fate and Transport,” was one of 71 selected from over 500 preproposals. Collaborators include the Chinese Academy Institute of Geochemistry and South China University of Technology, both in Guangzhou, China; Bates College in Maine; and Rutgers faculty from Environmental Science, the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Geology, and Civil Engineering.

Jackie Taylor, a master’s candidate in **David Bushek**’s lab, received a graduate student grant-in-aid from the New Jersey Water Resource Research Institute (NJWRRRI) for her project titled “Restored oyster reef habitat use by the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) in the lower Delaware Bay.”

For a full listing of grants received January 16 through February 15, please see the [February grants report](#).

Publications and Editorships

An article by **Alan Robock**, professor (Environmental Sciences), **Georgiy Stenchikov**, research professor (Department of Environmental Sciences), **Luke Oman**, researcher (Department of Environmental Sciences), and three others will be published in the March 2 issue of *Science*.

Conference, Seminars, Other Events

Eric Lam, professor in the Department of Plant Biology & Pathology, was invited to speak at the XV Plant and Animal Genomes International Conference at San Diego, CA, January 13–16. The title of his lecture was “Chromatin charting in *Arabidopsis thaliana*—tracking and analyses of heterochromatin-mediated gene silencing.”

Henry John-Alder, professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, along with Robert Cox and Emily Taylor (Cal. State San Luis Obispo) presented an invited contribution titled “Proximate Determinants of Sexual Size Dimorphism: Case Studies from Squamate Reptiles” in a Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB) symposium called “Ecological Dimorphisms in Vertebrates: Proximate and Ultimate Causes.” The SICB conference was held in Phoenix during the first week of January.



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GETTING TO KNOW...

Marie Prieur, director of development for the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



Marie Prieur has an adventuresome spirit, to say the least. When she visited New Brunswick in August to interview for the director of development position, it was the first time she had ever set foot in the United States. “Many people would think that after Provence I would never go anywhere else,” she said. “But an interesting job is more important.”

What keeps Prieur interested is an environment where she is learning about things that have practical applications in day-to-day life. When she was 22, she founded Appli-Langue, a language training school for executives. She loved listening to the presentations the executives made about their organizations, which gave her broad knowledge of many sectors of the business world.

After running the school for 16 years, she sold the business. She moved to Sodexo Food and Services, where she advanced to a position as regional operations director. “But after a few years, I realized that I wanted to return to a learning environment.”

Prieur found her passion for fundraising when she moved to the Grenoble Graduate School of Business as a “matchmaker” between education and business. She then took a position with Euromed Marseille School of Management, where she worked to increase corporate partnerships and implemented an international student recruitment campaign. She liked the connection to higher education and to linking ideas with the real world. She also found that she particularly enjoyed working with faculty. She was impressed by how committed they were to their work, and she liked helping them to make their ideas marketable.


When she started looking for new challenges, Prieur focused on opportunities that would draw upon her entrepreneurial spirit and interest in science. When she spotted the ad for her current position in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, it seemed like a perfect fit.

Much of her time since her arrival has been spent getting to know the faculty, and that has reaffirmed her enthusiasm. “I am fascinated by what the faculty do here, and how devoted they are about their work,” she said.

She is working closely with Dean Goodman as they devise a fundraising strategy. “There are big challenges ahead,” she said. “There are acute needs in fellowships and facilities. But the right ingredients are here. When the Capital Campaign is launched in July, the college and station will be ready to forge ahead.”

—Michele Hujber

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Please send comments, suggestions, contributions, photos, and questions to Amanda Kolling, kolling@aesop.rutgers.edu, Office of Communications. Photos must be high-resolution and should add to the editorial value of a submission (i.e., the photo should represent some action, such as receiving an award or giving a lecture, and should not be a standard head shot). Future issues of the Dean's Monthly Message will be published on the last Monday of each month. Deadline for submissions is one week prior to publication.



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