

A MESSAGE FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DEAN
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

June 2007

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

Alan Robock (Environmental Sciences) has been named the American Meteorological Society/Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecturer for the 2008–2009 academic year. Robock will be one of approximately 25 distinguished lecturers who will be available to give invited talks to Sigma Xi chapters during the year. Sigma Xi is an international, multidisciplinary research society whose programs and activities promote the health of the scientific enterprise and honor scientific achievement. There are nearly 60,000 Sigma Xi members in more than 100 countries around the world. Sigma Xi chapters, more than 500 in all, can be found at colleges and universities, industrial research centers and government laboratories.

Carey Williams, equine extension specialist, has been selected as the recipient of the 2007 Northeast American Dairy Science Association–American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) Young Scientist Award for Education. This award is in recognition of outstanding contributions to the broad field of animal/dairy science by a young scientist as a researcher and/or educator. Carey was nominated by Michael Westendorf.

In April, **Kathleen Morgan**, chair of Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS), received the American Dietetic Association Foundation: Ross Award in Women's Health. This award recognizes dietitians and registered dietetic technicians who make a significant contribution in the area of nutrition and women's health. The award will be presented on October 1 in Philadelphia at the American Dietetic Association Foundation's gala event.

Carol Byrd-Bredbenner, specialist in community nutrition, **Jackie Maurer**, FCHS research associate, and **Darlene Grasso**, a Food Policy Institute technician, received the American Dietetic Association's Anita Owen Award for Innovative Nutrition Education Programs for the Public for "Know Before You Serve" and "Ask Before You Eat." They were also awarded \$1,000 for Food Allergy Awareness Education for Food Service Operations and the General Public in New Jersey.

The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)–New Jersey SeaGrant has nominated **Rutgers Coastal Ocean Dynamics Applications Radar** (CODAR) surface wave observing capability enhancements for the NOAA display at the Smithsonian. Monmouth County's Health Department is now using Rutgers' CODAR network on a regular basis for beach closures.

Rutgers Coastal Ocean Observation Lab has been awarded a Naval Research Lab (NRL) Collaboration Award for providing inspiration to Navy scientists.

Student Activities and Accomplishments

Monica Palta (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) received a grant of \$1,000 from the Society of Wetland Scientists Student Research Grants Program for her proposal "Management of Nitrate Removal in an Urban Setting: Examining Hydrologic, Geomorphic, and Biogeochemical Controls on Denitrification over Multiple Spatiotemporal Scales in Urban Wetlands."

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During its 2007 Annual Meeting, Coastal America recognized **John Balletto** (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) for his work with Coastal America and the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership in organizing state chapters in the Mid-Atlantic region. Balletto was also elected to the Board of Directors to the Coastal America Foundation as one of the only nongovernment directors. The goal of Coastal America is the better management of coastal resources, coordination of their statutory responsibilities, and combining of their resources and expertise.

Patricia Alvarez (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) received \$3,000 from the Organization for Tropical Studies and the Francis Boyssuit Fellowship to investigate effects of pathogens on plant distribution in undisturbed lowland tropical forests in Manu National Park, Peru.

Jaclyn Taylor (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) was selected as a 2008 National Sea Grant Knauss Fellow. This one-year paid fellowship provides a unique educational experience to students who have an interest in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources.

The following students in the Ecology and Evolution graduate program received research project funding:

Julian Avery, \$974 for “Using microsatellite markers to establish the provenance of bluebirds on Bermuda.” (Advisor Julie Lockwood)

Wes Brooks, \$1,000 for “Species richness and habitat invasibility: Lessons from Rockland Hammock restoration.” (Advisor Rebecca Jordan)

William Landesman, \$848 for “The role of precipitation in structuring soil microbial communities and ecosystem processes” (Advisor John Dighton)

Brooke Maslo, \$915 for “A comparison of foraging efficiency of piping plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) across potential foraging habitats along coastal New Jersey.” (Advisor Steven Handel)

Monica Palta, \$1,000 for “Linking form to function: Using soil properties to predict nitrogen removal across an urban wetland landscape.” (Advisor Joan Ehrenfeld)

Jaclyn Taylor, \$1,000 for “Demonstrating the habitat value of oyster aquaculture in Delaware Bay.” (Advisor David Bushek)



Left: **Kimberly Schaller** with **Carol Martin Rutgers** at Cook College's 2007 Commencement.

Kimberly Y. Schaller (nutritional Sciences) graduated last month and received a \$500 scholarship as the Cooperative Education Student of the Year 2006–2007 from the Cooperative Education Program. Adria Sherman was her faculty sponsor. Schaller worked for three semesters as the cooperative education study, strategy, and planning group intern at Bristol-Myers Squibb and will continue her studies at the Temple University's School of Pharmacy this fall.

Left: **Kimberly Schaller** with **Carol Martin Rutgers** at Cook College's

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Mary Moore (undergraduate, Meteorology) has been awarded the Werner A. Baum Undergraduate Scholarship from the American Meteorological Society for the upcoming academic year. The endowed undergraduate scholarship is awarded annually in the amount of \$5,000 and is based on high achievements in education and research.

Grants and Fundraising Efforts

George Carman (Food Science) has been awarded a grant of \$351,897 from the National Institutes of Health for his research on “Phospholipid Metabolism and Membrane Function.” For 2008–2009 and 2009–2010, Carman will receive \$352,771 annually.

Eric Powell, director of Haskin Shellfish Research Lab, has received notice of a \$25,000 grant for a DuPont Clear into the Future Graduate Student Fellowship. The grant will fund a graduate student for one year. In addition, the lab received \$5,000 as part of the Clear into the Future University Seminar Series.

The Agricultural Agents’ Association of New Jersey (AAANJ) has announced that **Wes Kline**, Cumberland County agricultural agent, has been awarded the 2007 grant from the AAANJ Research, Group Study, and Professional Improvement Grant Program for his project “Determination of Fecal Coliform, *E. Coli*, and Calmonella Contamination of Irrigation Water Sources.”

Luanne Hughes, Gloucester County FCHS educator, **Alexandra Grenci**, Hunterdon County FCHS educator, and **Vincent Smith**, Horizon NJ, will receive \$22,500 from July 2007–June 2008 for the “Action for Healthy Kids School Wellness Team Project.”

Ginny Powell, 4-H department chair, and **Macy Compton**, state 4-H program coordinator, received \$2,000 through the Monsanto 4-H Volunteer Initiative, National 4-H Council, to support a state 4-H volunteer training program to be held this October.

Alayne Torretta, Warren County 4-H agent and project director, **Lydia Blalock**, extension specialist in youth development, and **Ginny Powell**, 4-H department chair, received \$134,000 from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk New Communities Project.

Publications and Editorships

Rutgers Center for Remote Sensing & Spatial Analysis (CRSSA) has been working with the American Littoral Society to assess the impact of sea level rise in New Jersey on coastal habitats. CRSSA released its report “Impact of Sea Level Rise on NJ Coastal Habitats,” as well as a series of GIS-based databases and maps. The report provides recommendations and findings and can be found at <http://crssa.rutgers.edu/projects/coastal/>.



Researchers at Rutgers NJAES Food Policy Institute have conducted a nationwide survey of public knowledge, attitudes, intentions and behaviors related to the threat of highly pathogenic avian influenza. The results suggest that although most Americans have heard about it and have talked about it, they don't know much about it. The full report can be found at <http://www.foodpolicyinstitute.org>.

Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events



Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Leadership Development Program (NJALDP) held its graduation this month at the Agricultural Museum. Graduates included two generations of the Blew family of Pittstown, NJ. Their Oak Grove Farm is recognized for its organic practices and a strong relationship with its customers.

Left to right: E. Ralph Hostetter, chairman of American Farm Publications, Inc., and benefactor of the NJALDP, Susan Blew, and her son Eric Blew.

On June 13 and 14, **Jason Grabosky** (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources) and the Rutgers Urban and Community Forestry, along with the Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis (CRSSA) hosted the Mid-Atlantic Train-The-Trainers sessions for i-TREE, a suite of software tools for managing and quantifying urban forest impacts. i-TREE is a cooperative initiative between the US Forest Service, Davey Tree Expert Company, The Society of Municipal Arborists, and the Arbor Day Foundation.

Nurgul Fitzgerald, Assistant Extension Specialist in Health Promotion and Behavior, co-chaired a mini symposium, "Diet and Food Security in Diverse Communities at the Experimental Biology Conference in Washington, D.C., on May 1.

On May 19 **New Jersey 4-H** held a garden party and dedication ceremony for the 4-H Bird and Butterfly Garden, established by Boy Scouts and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County. The garden, valued at over \$20,000, serves to educate the public about environmental stewardship.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between Rutgers University and the Swedish Museum of Natural History for yearly exchange of herbarium material between Chrysler Herbarium and the museum in Stockholm, Sweden. This was facilitated by **Lena Struwe** (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources) and Executive Dean **Robert Goodman**. This new collaboration is a continuation of the nearly 400-year-old research connections between New Jersey and Sweden and is part of the 300-year jubilee of Carl Linnaeus that is being celebrated worldwide.

Judy Weis spent the first week of May in Denver at a meeting of the National Research Council Committee on Advancing Desalination Technologies. Weis was the only ecologist on the committee.

Lena Struwe arranged a BioBlitz at the Phillips Preserve in Old Bridge, NJ, on June 10, together with Richard Lear of the Middlesex County Parks Department. About 20 people helped identify a multitude of plants, insects, and birds. The complete species list will be available at <http://herbarium.rutgers.edu/bioblitz.htm>.

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DEAN'S CORNER

A major focus for me as we move into a new academic year is to begin in earnest an effort to encourage internationalization of the educational experience for undergraduate students of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. What do I mean by that? I mean a curriculum that increasingly takes a global focus—one that aims to connect local understanding and solutions to international issues. I also mean a curriculum that doesn't stop at the classroom, but that offers our students opportunities to study and work abroad.

Our goal should be to graduate students who are global citizens, who have a level of sophistication and knowledge of international issues that will make them competitive with their peers throughout the world. To create an environment that fosters and encourages this kind of learning experience, we should aim not only to increase study and work abroad opportunities for our students, but we should also strive to recruit international students who will add to the diversity of ideas and student experiences on our campus.

In a recent trip to China, I met with leaders of several major universities who were very receptive to the idea of sending students to our school. We have signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) with South China University of Technology for an undergraduate exchange program in environmental sciences, and we have reaffirmed our MOU with Shanghai Jiao Tong University in plant sciences with a focus on turf. Joint curriculum committees with these universities and our faculty have been formed and they are working on articulation agreements that will smooth the transfer of students from the Chinese universities to Rutgers. In addition, Rutgers has recently signed two MOU with Jilin University. These universities join the University of São Paulo in Brazil, with whom we already have an agreement and funded program in plant biology.

Finally, I want to emphasize that these internationalizing efforts are not limited to the undergraduate experience. A continuing and important area of focus will be extending our many existing collaborative research agreements, and creating new opportunities, with universities and centers throughout the world.

Best regards,



Robert M. Goodman
Executive Dean for Agriculture and Natural Resources
Executive Dean of Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences
Executive Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

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