

A MESSAGE FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE DEAN  
OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

November 2007

### Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

A new report by Academic Analytics ranks **Rutgers–New Brunswick** number 2 in agricultural sciences, number 5 in education, number 10 in humanities and fine arts, number 11 in family, consumer, and human sciences, number 19 in natural resources and conservation (includes environmental sciences), and number 23 in business. Overall, Rutgers is ranked 48th among the top large research universities in faculty productivity, which includes publications, citations, grants, and honors.

The **Rutgers NJAES Environmental Stewards** program has been unanimously selected as the winner of the 2008 Governors Environmental Excellence Award in the environmental education category. The award will be presented at a reception at the governor's mansion on November 29. Among those who work with the Environmental Stewards program are **Jan Zientek** (Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension of Essex County), **Mary Cummings** (Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension of Gloucester County), **Chris Obropta** (assistant extension specialist), **Joe Ponessa** (extension specialist), **Mary Powers Nikola** (Leadership and Organizational Development), **Stephanie Murphy** (Soil Testing Laboratory), **Lisa Evard**, **Dave Robinson** (Geography), **Dave Specca** (EcoComplex), **Joe Paulin** (extension specialist), **Rebecca Jordan** (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources), and **Paul Gottlieb** (Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics).

**Steven Handel** (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) was awarded the Members Award at the California Society for Ecological Restoration Annual Conference on October 25 in San Diego. Handel and the Great Park Design Studio Ecologists received this honor for their submission of a poster titled "Orange County Great Park: A Model for Large-Scale Ecological Restoration in an Urban Setting." Handel is a member of the consulting team designing the Orange County Great Park located in the City of Irvine. Handel has also been elected an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). He will receive this award at ASLA's annual meeting next fall in Philadelphia. Handel was cited for his work to mesh modern ecological restoration science with landscape design.

**Ted Chase** (Biochemistry and Microbiology) has been awarded the Peter Homack Award of the New Jersey section of American Water Resources Association. The award recognizes "persons who have made outstanding contributions toward a multidisciplinary understanding or management of water resources in New Jersey."

Several Rutgers scientists were participants in the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and contributed to its series of climate assessments as contributing authors or reviewers. They are **Richard Anyah**, **Anthony Broccoli**, **Alan Robock**, and **Georgiy Stenchikov** (all of Environmental Sciences); **Jennifer Francis** and **Paul Falkowski** (IMCS), **David Robinson** (Geography); and **Monica Mazurek** (Civil and Environmental Engineering).

*Packaging Strategies* magazine is naming Rutgers as one of the Most Influential Organizations in packaging in 2007, mainly for the innovative packaging research done by the **Department of Food Science**. The magazine is featuring the university's accomplishments in packaging in a special issue.

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The **Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve** recently celebrated 10 years of excellence in coastal research, education, and stewardship. In honor of this milestone, a sweetbay magnolia tree was planted at the Cousteau Center in Tuckerton at a ceremony held on September 13 with JC NERR staff and state and federal partners. Also at the ceremony, Kate Barba, deputy director of NOAA's Estuarine Reserve Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management, recognized **Josephine Kozić** (IMCS) as a recipient of the 2007 NOAA Environmental Hero Award. Sandy Condit, district director and Jeff Sagnip, communications director for Congressman Saxton presented Josephine with an American flag that flew over the United States Capitol.

**Kathleen Morgan** (Family and Community Health Sciences) received the American Dietetic Association Foundation's Ross Award in Women's Health. This award is given to recognize dietitians who make a significant contribution in the area of nutrition and women's health. The award was presented at the American Dietetic Association Foundation gala event in Philadelphia on October 1.

**Barbara O'Neill** (specialist in financial resource management) received the National Program Excellence Through Research Award from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in St. Paul, MN as part of a team award with three out-of-state colleagues. At the same event, **Marilou Rochford** (Cape May County family and community health sciences educator) received the 2007 Distinguished Service Award for dynamic leadership and creative implementation of Extension programs.

**Lisa Rothenburger** (Somerset County 4-H agent) received the Northeast Region Epsilon Sigma Phi Visionary Leadership Award, presented at the ESP Conference in September.

### Student Activities and Accomplishments

**Nicholas Violand** (undergraduate in general biotechnology, minor in biochemistry, certification in technical writing) began working as a Cooperative Education editorial intern during the summer and is continuing this fall at the *Tropical Fish Hobbyist*. In November, Violand gained billing as a [contributing writer](#). He wrote November's cover story ("How to Start and Maintain a Nano Reef") and also took all of the photos for the article.

**Allison Candelmo, Jeremy Feinberg, and William Landesman** (all graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) are teaching fellows this year on the NSF K-12 Teaching Fellowship with **Kathy Scott** (Cell Biology and Neuroscience). The program pairs graduate students and some undergraduates in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with middle school teachers to develop hands-on materials and activities to augment the current curriculum as requested by the schools involved.

### Grants and Fundraising Efforts

**William Hallman** (Human Ecology) and others at UMDNJ received \$92,544 from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health through the Fire Department of New York City for "Effects of the World Trade Center Disaster on New York City Firefighters: Assessing Mental Health Issues."





**James Simon** and **Qing-Li Wu** (Plant Biology and Pathology; New Use Agriculture and Natural Plant Products Program) have received word that a proposal to create a Center of Excellence for Research on Complementary and Alternative Medicine (in concert with Mt. Sinai Medical School as lead institute and Purdue University) has been approved by the National Institutes of Health. The center will focus on investigating the protective roles of grape-derived polyphenols in Alzheimer's disease. The grant provides \$373,000 over a five-year period.

**Barbara A. Zilinskas, Donald Y. Kobayashi, Gerben J. Zylstra, Ravit G. Duncan, and Timothy M. Casey** received an NSF award of \$600,000 for a project entitled "Biotechnology Scholars at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University."

**Uta Krogmann** (Environmental Sciences; PI) received \$1,813,114 from the NSF for "Self-Sufficient Urban Buildings" with co-PI Clinton Andrews (Planning and Public Policy). Krogmann is also the recipient along with PI Clinton Andrews and co-PI with Jennifer Senick (graduate student, Planning and Public Policy) of \$114,239 from the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission for "The Costs and Benefits of Green Buildings in the New Jersey Meadowlands."

### Publications and Editorships

**Rutgers Grant F. Walton Center for Remote Sensing & Spatial Analysis (CRSSA)** has released a report on Barnegat Bay land use change. As part of their ongoing monitoring efforts, CRSSA undertook to map and assess recent land use change in the Barnegat Bay watershed. The Barnegat Bay estuary system is continuing to experience a significant conversion of forested and wetland habitats to urban land cover and thereby exacerbating nutrient loading to the estuary. The full report can be found [here](#). CRSSA has also recently completed a natural and cultural resources inventory for New Jersey's Delaware Bayshore region, working in conjunction with the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition (SJBC). CRSSA and the SJBC undertook the geographically based inventory to identify, characterize, and map important natural and cultural resources for the region. The primary objectives of the project were to increase education and awareness of the natural resources within the Bayshore communities and to provide the region with fundamental planning tools and relevant data. The mapped data are stored in a GIS and are available for public use and download through the CRSSA web mapping service. A series of 20 full-color poster-sized maps were designed and are available for public use and display. More information and maps can be found [here](#).

### Conferences, Seminars, and Other Events

**Dawn Brasaemle** (Nutritional Sciences) co-organized a very successful FASEB Summer Research Conference, "Lipid Droplets: Metabolic Consequences of Stored Neutral Lipids," with Rosalind Coleman, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill. The conference, held July 28–August 2 at Vermont Academy, was the first ever convened to discuss diverse aspects of the biology of lipid droplets. Both **Ariel Igal** and **Judith Storch** (both of Nutritional Sciences) presented talks at this year's conference, as did **Gil-Soo Han**, a research associate working with **George Carman** (both of Food Science).





The first New Jersey Vector Biology Summit was held on October 19 and provided a forum for the Center for Vector Biology to obtain input from more than a hundred state, county, and university practitioners, biologists, and health professionals regarding the center's research and outreach priorities. Speakers included **Robert M. Goodman**, executive director of NJAES; Ken Bruder, chair of the New Jersey Mosquito Control Commission; and Mark Slaff, director of mosquito control in Morris County. The program included a historical perspective from Gordon Patterson, author of *Mosquito Wars: A History of Mosquito Control in Florida*, followed by a presentation by **Randy Gaugler**, center director. Several breakout sessions focused on analysis of the vector community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; a vision for the vector community; goal-setting for the vector community; and ways to sustain the progress of the vector community. Late in the day, each group reported on their findings, which will be further studied by the center staff and incorporated into its future plans.

## DEAN'S CORNER

One of my goals this year is to better engage our alumni and friends by spreading the word about the work that we do at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. Recently, we held the first of what will be a series of "Meet the Dean" events. Some 50 alumni from the Washington, D.C., area enjoyed food and drinks, met up with friends old and new, and heard me give an update on what we are doing broadly at Rutgers and more specifically at the school and experiment station. A lively question-and-comment period followed, lasting more than an hour. The event was jointly planned with the local Rutgers Washington, D.C., club; future events will similarly be planned with local Rutgers clubs. On November 7, we had the first of our in-state "Meet the Dean" events at the EcoComplex. A group of faculty members and students provided presentations for attendees on their research. I look forward to many more such events that shine a light on the excellence of our faculty, students, and staff.

### *Spotlight on Women in Science, Engineering, and Mathematics*

**Joan Bennett** (Plant Biology and Pathology), head of Rutgers [Office for the Promotion of Women in Science, Engineering, and Mathematics](#), and Catherine Duckett, associate director of the office, have put together a new website dedicated to archiving and showcasing the stories of Rutgers women in science, engineering, and mathematics. Almost two dozen women from the university have recounted what prompted their career choices and the steps they took along the way. As the [website](#) notes, "*Our Stories* is a collection of personal biographies from Rutgers women faculty in science, engineering, and mathematics. Hailing from diverse backgrounds, our faculty share their pioneering experiences in becoming the professionals that they are, many having traveled unique career paths." Among those showcased are **Dina Fonseca** (Entomology), **Lisa Rodenburg** (née Totten; Environmental Sciences), **Sarah Ralston** (Animal Sciences), **Elizabeth Sikes** (IMCS), and **Lena Struwe** (Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources).

