

Marilyn Magaram Center
For Food Science, Nutrition, and Dietetics

Director's Report: Spring/Summer 2018

*"We might think we are nurturing our garden, but of course it's our garden
that is really nurturing us." – Jenny Uglow*

The Spring semester was productive and fruitful with many exciting projects and events in the works, and our students and programs alike are continuing to thrive in myriad ways! The dedication and hard work of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff continues to further the mission and vision of the MMC as we serve not only the CSUN community, but also the global community by promoting good health and well-being through research, education, and services in food science, nutrition and dietetics.

As part of a \$1 million dollar, four-year grant awarded to the MMC by the USDA, we have been busy implementing our "Pathways to Success" program to create an educational pathway for students from high school all the way through the graduate level. This mentorship program also provides academic and financial support to dietetics fellows and is aimed at preparing the next generation of the nation's nutrition workforce, with a focus on addressing health disparities such as childhood obesity through improved nutrition and access to nutrition professionals trained in lactation education. In March, our Associate Director, Karmen Ovsepyan, traveled to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in Washington, D.C. along with Sophia Lopez, a CSUN graduate student, to give a presentation on our objectives and expected outcomes at a Project Director's meeting.

CSUN's Bull Ring New Venture Competition allows students to launch their innovative ideas in a "Shark Tank" like setting, and the MMC continues to feature food science and dietetic interns working in collaboration on products that highlight sustainability, nutritional health, and well-being. At this year's semi-finals in April, our Spicy Matador team presented their new line of salt-free seasoning, *Hot Stuf!* We are happy to report that we reached the semi-finals in this competition for the second year in a row and received a reward of \$250 to further our product development. Also in April, the MMC participated in CSUN's first annual AI-JAM, which provided an opportunity for students to solve real-world problems as they worked in teams to develop Artificial Intelligence projects. We are proud to announce that our teams earned the 2nd and 3rd place awards in the Research track for "AI-Adventurers" and "Helia Nutrition and Health," tools that use artificial intelligence and image recognition to help with portion control and tracking food intake to increase awareness and help in leading more healthy lifestyles. Both AI teams received funds to further develop these projects. Kudos to the Bull Ring and AI teams on their accomplishments!

The MMC continued to advocate for healthy Californians and healthy local economies at our 6th annual Public Policy Day on April 9th. This year's theme was "Health in Every Policy" and our keynote speaker was Senator Robert Hertzberg. With a focus on food and nutrition-related outcomes, presentations focused on how the health of both individuals and communities is impacted by a wide range of policies. Topics included the Farm Bill, sustainable agriculture, the obesity epidemic, Healthy People 2020, CalFresh, food insecurity, soda policy, and Los Angeles Unified School District wellness policies. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Sodium Reduction Initiative also kicked-off at CSUN on April 10th with the SRI's "Eat Your Best" campaign and cooking demonstration at the Farmer's Market. And earlier in the month of March, the Dietetic Interns traveled to Sacramento for the CAND Public Policy Workshop, where attendees met with legislators and discussed CAND's public policy priorities and CAND monitored bills. The MMC was also happy to sponsor the student reception at the CAND Annual Conference and sponsored students to attend the LAD Conference, providing opportunities for students to learn and network with professionals in the field of nutrition and dietetics. In addition, our students presented their research and received scholarships at the California WIC Association Annual Conference. Three additional scholarships were awarded to students through the FCS Department this year.

Student success is always our primary focus and through the MMC research center, both students and faculty have been successfully conducting their research in the community and presenting at various conferences and symposia, so please refer to our list of current MMC Research Lab projects for details. Our students won 1st place at the Community Engagement Symposium for their service learning project with *MyPlate! the Musical*, and several students also submitted

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poster presentations at CSUNposium this year. Our food science and nutrition interns participated in the 2018 IFT Food Industry Conference Student Product Development competition, in addition to receiving funding through CSUN's I-Corps Customer Discovery Program to develop a new line of functional foods called "FitJam," and other products and services.

In collaboration with the Jennifer Diamond Cancer Foundation, on May 31st the MMC hosted a "Cooking for Health" workshop in the Thieriot Lab for cancer patients and their families. During this workshop, participants focused on six topics: eating healthy for cancer prevention, helpful tips, ways to eat out while still eating healthy, hydration, food safety, and eating for survivorship. We look forward to hosting additional workshops in the future to support cancer patients, so please check the calendar of events on our website for upcoming dates.

In other exciting news, we recently began a collaboration with CSUN biology faculty, Dr. Rachel Mackelprang, on the "Bee a Matador" honey project. As part of her research, Dr. Mackelprang established two beehives at CSUN in May 2017 and now five beehives reside on campus in the Botanic Garden and Orange Grove. In February 2018, the honey produced by colonies of the Italian honeybees was extracted and bottled for the first time! MMC interns have been involved in the logo design and nutrition label creation and will have the opportunity to collaborate on developing a business plan and to produce and market the wildflower honey.

The CSUN Dietetic Internship program held its 3rd annual white coat graduation ceremony on June 1st. This was an exciting event for the 2017-2018 interns who completed their 10-month dietetic internships as part of the process of becoming registered dietitians. We would like to acknowledge their efforts and involvement that has become an essential part of the success of the MMC. We would also like to welcome the incoming 2018-2019 cohort of dietetic interns who will begin their MNT (Medical Nutrition Therapy) boot camp and DI orientation during the month of July. We look forward to helping them on their journey and wish to thank all our previous graduates, preceptors, and clinical affiliates who provide their knowledge expertise to our interns.

We have continued with our ongoing innovative projects such as the MMC Talks Education series, Eat to Be FIT 6-week online weight management program, Healthy Eating 360° series, cooking demonstrations at the Farmer's Market, cooking workshops for athletes, faculty, staff, and the community, as well as various lectures, symposia and educational opportunities. From diet and recipe analysis, to one-on-one nutrition counseling, to body fat composition testing, we offer a variety of services to meet the community's needs, including gardening and nutrition education. Other partnerships and innovative collaborations have been with LACI@CSUN, CSUN Innovates!, the Center of Achievement, the Language, Speech & Hearing Center (feeding therapy clinic), the Institute for Sustainability, and the Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing, utilizing the MMC Wellness Garden and assessment labs on campus. In the community, we have partnered with more than forty organizations to provide nutrition education, gardening, physical activity and cooking for children and their families, made possible by generous grants from Drown Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Aetna Foundation, Dignity Health, Cedars-Sinai, USDA, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, UCLA, Northeast Valley Health Corp. WIC Program, Campus Quality Fee, Community Engagement Interdisciplinary grant, and more.

We are excited to announce that a "Nutrition and Wellness" feature incorporating our Nutrition Experts blog, recipes, and videos, in addition to information on MMC products, services, and events, is now available on CSUN's official mobile app! We also continue to reach the global community through our websites and social media, so please refer to these platforms and to our forthcoming Summer newsletter for more details on our projects and events.

As always, I would like to thank our family, our hard-working staff, our dedicated students, our advisory board, my colleagues, our community partners, and our generous donors. A special thank you to Sally and Phil Magaram for their continuous support. Without the help and support of each one of you, we would not be able to carry out many of our programs and achieve our mission. I look forward to working on more exciting and innovative projects this summer and during the 2018-2019 academic year!

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Besnilian, Executive Director

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