Director’s Report: Fall 2018

“It is like the seed put in the soil – the more one sows, the greater the harvest.”

Orison Swett Marden

It was a very busy and productive summer with many research, education, leadership, and community outreach opportunities! The Marilyn Magaram Center continues to serve the needs of diverse communities and encourages the public to draw on the special talents of its students, faculty, and staff through a variety of innovative programs and services, and I am proud to say that the MMC has truly become an “Innovation Hub” for Food Science, Nutrition and Dietetics in our mission to promote good health and well-being and provide exceptional products and services to the CSUN community and beyond!

We were excited to host two summer culinary camps for middle school children in collaboration with the Michael D. Eisner College of Education’s SAEP program, which included both a one-week camp and a five-week camp in June and July. We were thankful for the leadership of our very own dietetic student and chef and a local high school chef, in addition to having Sally and Phil Magaram and Dr. Tom and Yolanda Chen attend, observe, and judge the student cooking and activities. In September, the MMC was also honored to host a pie-baking event in the Thieriot Lab for the Los Angeles chapter of the Young Presidents’ Organization.

It was an honor for me to represent CSUN and the MMC at the American University of Armenia (AUA) this summer, which has resulted in two collaborative projects and multiple contracts and grants in process. We have also held several meetings with the Dean's office, in addition to consultations with our Dept. Chair, advisory board Assessment Committee to review and update our Program of Work Dashboard and the Education and Research Committee to finalize the faculty and student research grant that will help support various research and leadership opportunities. The MMC was also recently selected to participate in a pilot program to develop a cost analysis of our products and services.

We continue to provide many educational and outreach opportunities for our students, faculty, and the community which include workshops for Weight Management, Diabetes Prevention, Diabetes Management, Cancer Prevention, Sports Nutrition (Athletics) and Gardening Education, just to name a few. There have been numerous volunteer, internship, and leadership opportunities for students in Family and Consumer Sciences, as well as other academic departments such as Business, Engineering, Sustainability, Journalism, Art, Computer Science, and Kinesiology through many of our innovative projects such as Helia (Al-Jam), GSTAR (VAR-Jam), Spicy Matador and FitJam, and agricultural systems such as hydroponics and aquaponics. We have also been conducting research for the CSU-5 Sodium Reduction Initiative and “Eat Your Best” campaign with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. In an effort to further enhance student success, we conducted several trainings during the summer and early fall and are currently working on developing the MMC Research Lab manual and website.

We are delighted to announce that the second edition of our Wellness Kitchen Cookbook is in the final stages and soon to be released! This cookbook is filled with unique recipes inspired by CSUN’s very own orange groves and our student-developed Matador Marmalade, which is entirely student-produced from recipe trials to label design and born out of the idea that a product made by the students, for the students, could generate school spirit and add to the university's great legacy. By sourcing directly from the orange groves on campus, our product also supports CSUN's sustainability efforts.

Our students have continued to create a “buzz” around campus through our collaboration with the Biology Department and the “Bee a Matador” honey project. During a second honey harvest in July, Dr. Rachel Mackelprang’s team of students and our MMC interns centrifuged, filtered, and bottled the honey in jars with labels they designed, extracting almost 100 pounds of honey! We are also proud to announce that in August, “Bee a Matador” won the People’s Choice
Award in The Valley Hive 3rd Annual Honey and Recipe Competition in Chatsworth. We continue growing our product line – in addition to Matador Marmalade and Spicy Matador, we are also developing sauces and protein bars.

We recently secured the following funding: Joseph Drown Foundation – general support for MMC and wellness nutrition assessment clinic, funded for $250,000; Richard Siegel Foundation – marketing support for MMC, funded for $30,000; Northeast Valley Health Corporation WIC, funded for $60,000; Los Angeles County Sodium Reduction Initiative (LACSRI) – Survey of Sodium Knowledge, Use and Health Related Behaviors, County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health, funded for $70,510.00; Let’s Cook and Grow Healthy Foods in Schools, Kaiser Permanente Panorama City, funded for $10,500; Antioxidant Research, Education Research Committee Grant, Southern California Institute of Food Technologists (SCIFTs), funded for $37,051.80; Pathways to success for Hispanic students as registered dietitians, United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA), funded for $250,000; Let’s eat healthy in schools, Kaiser Permanente Woodland Hills Community Grant, funded for $60,000; Champions for Change, funded for $290,000. We are also currently working on several contracts with Nissin, Local Roots, and FAR as well as a contract with Peru, and we have secured additional funding through the purchase of our products by the California State University Chancellor's office, CSUN Dining, and University Advancement.

As always, I am extremely grateful to our students, faculty, staff, and donors for their commitment and continued support. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Sally and Phil Magaram and all those whose generous contributions make it possible for us to achieve our mission and vision. We hope you will be able to join us at our upcoming Donor Appreciation event in the spring as we celebrate our accomplishments, unveil the new donor wall, and showcase many of our outstanding projects and products!

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Besnilian, Executive Director