May 2011

Annual Kirksey Lecture Examines Dietary Assessment in the National Children’s Study

Dr. Avanelle Kirksey, a valued faculty member of the Department of Foods and Nutrition 1961-1994, left a legacy at Purdue University. Her groundbreaking research, valued teaching, and community outreach efforts are honored with this lecture series.

The 2011 Avanelle Kirksey lecture was held on March 11. Dr. Anna Maria Siega-Riz presented the topic “Improving the assessment of diet in the National Children’s Study: The battle between technological advancement and old habits.” Dr. Siega-Riz is a Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and joint appointed in the Department of Nutrition in the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Siega-Riz is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for the School of Public Health and a fellow at the Carolina Population Center. She serves as the program leader for the Reproductive, Perinatal and Pediatric Program in the Department of Epidemiology. She has expertise in diet methodology, gestational weight gain, maternal nutritional status and its effects on birth outcomes, obesity development, and in dietary trends and intakes among children and Hispanic populations.

Dr. Siega-Riz uses a multidisciplinary team perspective as a way to address complex problems such as prematurity, fetal programming, and racial disparities and obesity. She received the March of Dimes Agnes Higgins Award for Maternal and Fetal Nutrition in 2007 and has served on three IOM Committees- Reexamination of the IOM Pregnancy Weight Guidelines, Review of the WIC Food Packages, and Standards for Conducting Systematic Evidence-Based Reviews.

She was the lead investigator of the evidence-based review on outcomes of maternal weight gain sponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. She
presently serves as the co-PI of the North Carolina Center for the National Children’s study (NCS) and leads the formative research project on improving the dietary assessment protocols in the NSC. Other current co-investigator roles include the Hispanic Community Health Study, Vitamin D and preterm birth study, National Birth Defects Research and Prevention Study, and Genetic Susceptibility in the Etiology of Child Neuroblastoma. Dr. Siega-Riz earned a B.S.P.H. in nutrition from the School of Public Health at UNC-Chapel Hill; and M.S. in food, nutrition, and food service management from UNCGreensboro; and a Ph.D. in nutrition and epidemiology from the School of Public Health at UNC-Chapel Hill.

This lecture is made possible through the generous support of the Gerber Products Company and the endowment supported by Ross Products Division, Abbott Laboratories and alumni and friends of Dr. Avanelle Kirksey.

Foods and Nutrition Students Present Research at Experimental Biology

Experimental Biology is an annual multidisciplinary, scientific meeting in which nearly 13,000 scientists and others from six sponsoring societies and 16 guest societies share recent research findings. Faculty and students from Purdue’s Foods and Nutrition department are frequent contributors to this meeting. The most recent meeting, held in April 2011 was no exception.

A few of the students who participated are highlighted below:

• Eileen Weinheimer, Minghua Tang, and Vanessa Kobza, graduate students in Dr. Wayne Campbell’s lab presented their National Institutes of Health funded research. Each of their projects was supported by the CTSI. Eileen was also supported by a NIH graduate student training grant.

• TusaRebecca Schap (doctoral student) gave an oral presentation and Heather Eicher-Miller (post-doc) gave a poster. Both are in Carol Boushey’s research group and are working on NIH-supported projects that are also registered with the CTSI. Also, TusaRebecca is a CTSI pre-doctoral trainee.

• Wei Zheng, in Dorothy Teegarden’s lab, gave an oral presentation, Effect of 1,25 dihydroxyvitamin D on energy metabolism in MCF10 breast epithelial cells. She was also in the Vitamins and Minerals as well as the Diet and Cancer poster competitions.

• Rachel Ebner, a graduate student in Amy Mobley’s group gave a poster presentation Attitudes, beliefs and barriers related to milk consumption in low-income women ages 60 years and older.

These types of meetings are not only important to faculty but also to the students. Donations that can go to travel awards or graduate student support are always appreciated.

Spring Fest Offers More than Milk Mustaches and Memories
Spring Fest is a fun and educational opportunity for students and the community. Under the direction of Marleen Troyer, Emily Hohman and Corrie Whisner, graduate students in the Interdepartmental Nutrition Program, coordinated the activities at the Foods and Nutrition booth during Spring Fest on April 9 and 10, 2011. Between 25 and 30 undergraduate students helped visitors pose for a picture with their milk mustaches made of whipped cream. Students handed out information on milk and dairy consumption, calcium, and bone health. “It gives students a chance to interact with the public and share nutrition information in a fun way,” Emily said. “We even had one woman who had a milk mustache photo taken of her dog!”

Buttercup the Cow, the mascot for the American Dairy Association, made an appearance to promote the importance of milk and dairy products. Children received ‘Got Milk’ rulers and coloring books with information about the dairy industry. Several visitors shared dairy-related stories, including one gentleman whose grandfather owned a dairy farm and made and sold cheese. His favorite thing to eat from the cheese shop was the cheese curds. “He said the good ones squeak in your mouth,” Corrie shared. “He inspired me to try those someday.”

**Berdine Martin receives Sigma Xi Award**

Dr. Berdine Martin, Research Associate for Dr. Connie Weaver, received the 2011 Professional Staff Research Award from the Purdue Chapter of Sigma Xi at its banquet on April 4. Dr. Martin has been the research manager in Dr. Weaver’s laboratory since 1986. She has been a valued member of the department, serving in a variety of capacities including teaching the maternal and infant nutrition class from 1997-2009.

Berdine has been the Director of the Camp Calcium project since its inception in 1990. This project has included 11 different summer research camps for approximately 400 teenagers. The information gleaned from these camps has been instrumental in setting calcium requirements and dietary guidelines for teens to allow for stronger skeletons and osteoporosis prevention as they age. Dr. Martin has been the author or co-author of 58 research articles that define the effect of various physiological and dietary parameters on mineral metabolism in various populations.