

November  
2024

# NUTRITION



## December

- 2 Last Day of Classes - Fall 2024
- 3 Yoga & Coffee Social
- 12 Nutrition Christmas Party
- 12 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremonies
- 13 Graduate Commencement Ceremonies
- 24 Beginning of Faculty and Staff Winter Break

## January

- 2 End of Winter Break
- 13 First Day of Classes
- 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

# NEWS



# NUTRITION GRADUATE STUDENT **3-MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION**

The Department of Nutrition’s graduate students delivered impressive performances last Friday at the 3-Minute Thesis Competition. Participants presented their research in concise, engaging presentations, vying for the opportunity to represent the department at the 2025 Annual Life Sciences Symposium this February.

Congratulations to our winners—Kaitlyn Blankley, Sahar Esmailinezhad, Joelle Sfeir, Nirjhar Ruth Ghosh, Lauren Gladwell, and Zeyu “Woody” Liu—whose outstanding presentations earned them a chance presenting at the symposium. We look forward to seeing some of our graduate students showcase their work on a larger stage this spring!



## HANDS ON LEARNING: **DPD STUDENTS VISIT BENTWOOD DAIRY**

On Nov. 6th, Karen Beathard, Alicia Gilmore, Meghan Windham and DPD students attended a tour of the Bentwood Dairy sponsored by Dairy Max. David Jackson, the farm owner, provided a behind-the-scenes experience of a real dairy farm—from cow care to environmentally sustainable practices to dairy farm families' passion for providing delicious, nourishing foods for their communities. This tour reinforced the hard work of dairy farm families to produce a high quality, nutritious product for all consumers.

In attendance included students Grace Owens, Josie Thompson, Caroline O'Driscoll, Avery Yokem, Gabriela Rivera-Vega, David Tierranegra, Katie Gimlin, Holly Alexander, Ryann Orcutt.



## SCHOOL FIELD TRIP TO **AGRILIFE RESEARCH CENTER IN DALLAS, TX**

On December 3, 2024, the Healthy Living (HL) team members of Texas A&M AgriLife's Institute for Advancing Health Through Agriculture (IHA) hosted a delayed intervention school from the **Strong Teens for Healthy Schools Change Club (STHS)** study at the Dallas Center alongside Extension and three other research departments (Turf Grass, Controlled Environments Agriculture, Urban Water).

The goal of this visit was to educate students in the study on different research career paths they could pursue in the future.



## DR. XIMENA PAEZ-COLASANTE **PARTICIPATES IN FIRST LEAD AGRILIFE SESSION**

Dr. Ximena Paez-Colasante joined fellow participants of the LEAD AgriLife Cohort 2 for their first in-person session held October 22–24, 2024, at The Stella Hotel in College Station. The event set the tone for a year of leadership development, offering opportunities to build connections, engage in thought-provoking discussions, and explore strategies for impactful leadership within AgriLife.

A highlight of the session was a panel featuring Colonel Al Davis, Dr. Cliff Lamb, Dr. Angela Burkham, Dr. Patricia Klein, Dr. Amy Swinford, and Dr. Jeffrey Savell. The panelists shared strategies for aligning teams with organizational missions, as well as insights on the essential qualities that distinguish successful leaders, including authenticity, integrity, and strong values.

On the second evening of the session, participants traveled to the Rosenthal Meat Science & Technology Center for a demonstration led by Dr. Savell, Dr. Davey Griffin, and Ray Riley, where they learned about the different cuts of beef. Following the demonstration, participants seasoned and grilled their own steaks for dinner.

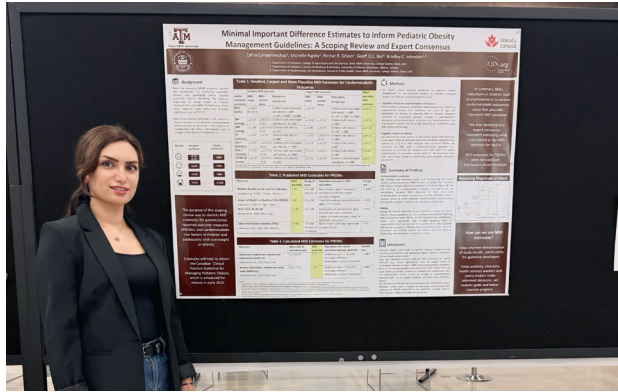


# NUTRITION THANKSGIVING LUNCH

Last Thursday, the Department of Nutrition came together for a heartfelt Thanksgiving lunch to celebrate and give thanks. The event was a wonderful reminder of the connections we share and the gratitude we feel for the amazing individuals in our department.

A special thank you goes out to everyone who helped organize and host this gathering—it couldn't have been possible without you! To our faculty, staff, students, and everyone who makes our Nutrition world go round, we grateful for you all.

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us in the Department of Nutrition!



## SAHAR ESMAEILINEZHAD **POSTER PRESENTATION**

Sahar Esmailinezhad from Dr. Bradley Johnston’s lab recently presented her research at Obesity Week 2024, a conference hosted by The Obesity Society in San Antonio, TX. Her poster is titled “Minimal Important Difference Estimates to Inform Pediatric Obesity Management Guidelines: A Scoping Review and Expert Consensus,” Congratulations on this incredible achievement and for representing our department on an international stage!



## NUTRITION FEATURED IN **AGRILIFE TODAY**

“AgriLife Today” recently spotlighted the launch of the Human Health Track in the Department of Nutrition, emphasizing the program’s dedication to preparing students for careers in healthcare. The article discusses the program’s updates, reflecting a commitment to meeting the growing demand for human-centered health education while addressing students’ evolving career interests. Read the full article here: [tx.ag/HHTrack](https://tx.ag/HHTrack)

# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



## DR. ROBERT S. CHAPKIN **INVITED SPEAKER**

Dr. Robert S. Chapkin, University Distinguished Professor, AAAS Fellow, Distinguished Fellow American Society for Nutrition, and Deputy Director Texas A&M University Regional Center of Excellence in Cancer Research was invited by the Department of Cancer Biology at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center to speak on November 20, 2024, in Houston, TX at the Seminar Series. Dr. Chapkin presented “Targeting plasma membrane spatial dynamics to suppress aberrant Wnt signaling”. Attendees were exposed and educated to the research and discovery occurring within the Chapkin Lab.



## MEGHAN WINDHAM **SLEEP AND NUTRITION**

On Tuesday, November 19, faculty member Meghan Windham, MPH, RD, LD, was the featured speaker at a virtual event hosted by Living Well TAMU. Meghan shared valuable insights on the connection between nutrition and sleep, offering practical tips to help participants fuel their bodies for improved sleep quality. Her presentation highlighted the importance of balanced nutrition in supporting overall health and wellness, including better sleep patterns. Thank you, Meghan, for representing our department and contributing to the well-being of the Texas A&M community!



# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



## DR. WAYLON HASTINGS **INVITED SPEAKER**

Dr. Hastings was an invited speaker at the second annual conference for the Biomarkers of Aging Consortium, which took place at Harvard Medical School in Boston, MA from November 1-2. This conference brings together foremost experts from academia, industry, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to advance research on aging and longevity. Dr. Hastings' talk provided an example for productive collaboration between academia, industry (the DNA testing company Hurdle), and pharma (Bayer Healthcare) to develop a translational biomarker of inflammaging.



## JACOB SZESZULSKI **FELLOWSHIP AND WORKSHOPS**

Jacob Szeszulski has been named a 2025 CATIE Fellow through the IES-funded Comprehensive Program for Adaptive Interventions in Training in Education (CATIE). In addition, Jacob will be leading two preconference workshops at the Society of Behavioral Medicine Conference. His workshops will focus on adapting interventions to retain their core elements while ensuring they fit new populations or settings effectively and simplifying the principles of implementation science for intervention developers, helping to improve the delivery and scale-up of interventions.

# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



LEXI MACMILLAN URIBE

## **GUEST EDITOR AND INVITED SPEAKER**

Lexi MacMillan-Urbe has been appointed Guest Editor for an upcoming special issue of the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior focused on the WIC program. In this role, she manages manuscript submissions, coordinates peer reviews, and guides authors through revisions ahead of the issue's December 2025 release. Additionally, Lexi was an invited speaker for a Spanish-language livestream presentation titled Addressing Barriers to Healthy Eating in the Hispanic Community. She shared insights on overcoming barriers to healthy eating and conducted a cooking demonstration, offering practical solutions tailored to the Hispanic community.



## UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

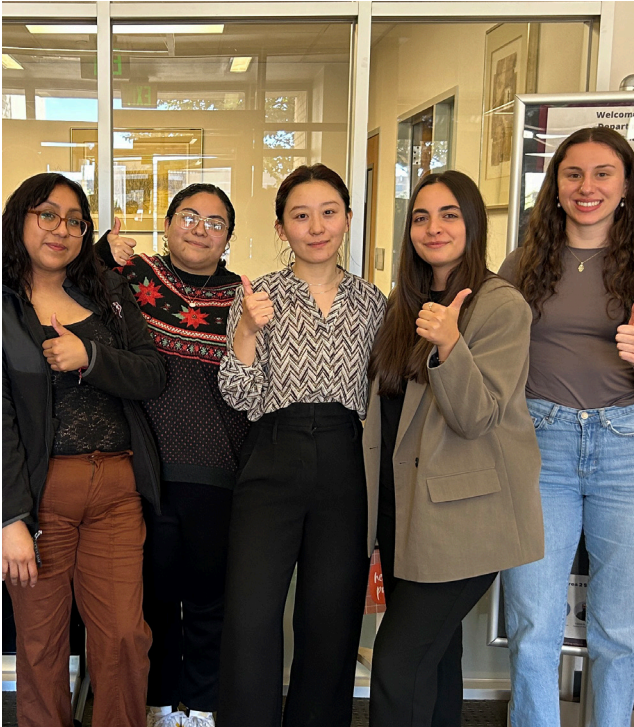
# KELVIE ANN HAAS

Senior Kevlie Ann Haas, pursuing the Human Health track in Nutrition, draws inspiration from her personal health journey. Diagnosed with an autoimmune disease in middle school, she discovered the transformative power of nutrition through her care team, sparking her passion for the field. This realization led her to pursue a degree that combines a multidisciplinary approach to science, the human body, and nutrition at Texas A&M University.

While balancing full-time work to support her education, Kevlie has excelled in her studies, earning the title of Distinguished Student in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for the Summer 2024 semester. Beyond academics, she contributes to her community as a volunteer soccer coach, reflecting her dedication to service and teamwork.

Kevlie credits the Department of Nutrition faculty for their support and guidance throughout her academic journey. She expresses special gratitude to Mr. Aaron Riviere and Dr. Deborah Threadgill for fostering a learning environment where students feel valued and encouraged to grow.

With aspirations to pursue a career in medicine, Kevlie aims to combine her understanding of nutrition with patient care to make a meaningful impact in the healthcare field. Her hard work and commitment to excellence highlight the strength of the department and its students!



## GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

# HONGHUI “AMBER” CHANG

Honghui “Amber” Chang, a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Nutrition, is dedicated to advancing adolescent health through her research on Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) using clinical nutrition approaches.

Amber serves as the President of the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Association (NSGA) and recently demonstrated exceptional leadership and organizational skills at the Department’s 3-Minute Thesis competition, where she also delivered an outstanding presentation. Additionally, she was selected as part of the Spring 2024 Health Equity Fellowship cohort with the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists.

Amber highlights the Department’s collaborative and supportive environment, expressing gratitude for her labmates and the mentorship of Dr. Heidi Vanden Brink, whose guidance has been pivotal in her academic success. Amber’s career aspirations include applying her research to address the challenges faced by adolescents with PCOS, helping improve their health and quality of life.

We deeply value and appreciate Amber’s dedication to her studies and the department. Her remarkable efforts, kindness, and contributions as both a researcher and leader truly stand out, and we are proud to have her as part of our team!

# RECENT PUBLICATIONS

**Rethorst CD**, Carmody TH, Argenbright KA, Vazquez L, DeLuca T, Mayes T, Hamman HA, Trivedi MH. The Physical Activity in Cancer Survivors (PACES) trial: A factorial randomized trial to optimize intervention for breast cancer survivors, *J Beh Med*, 47:1002-1011, 2024.

Githinji P, **MacMillan Uribe AL**, **Szeszulski J**, **Rethorst CD**, Luong V, Xin L, Rolke LJ, Smith MG, **Seguin-Fowler RA**. Public Health Communication During the COVID-19 Health Crisis: Sustainable Pathways to Improve Health Information Access and Reach among Underserved Communities, *Humanities and Social Science Communications*, 11:1218, 2024.

**Rethorst CD**, Trombello JM, Chen P, Carmody TH, Lazalde A, Trivedi MH. Pilot evaluation of the acceptability and feasibility of an adapted tele-behavioral activation intervention targeting physical activity in persons with depression, *BMC Psychology*, in press.

**Szeszulski J**, Rolke LJ, Ayine P, Bailey R, Demment M, Eldridge GD, Folta SC, Graham ML, **MacMillan Uribe AL**, McNeely A, Nelson ME, Pullyblank K, **Rethorst C**, Stogatz D, **Seguin-Fowler RA**. Process Evaluation Findings from Strong Hearts, Healthy Communities 2.0: A Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Intervention for Rural Women. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2024;21:122. doi: 10.1186/s12966-024-01670-y PMID: 39438920

Palmer JC, Davies AL, Spiga F, Heitmann BL, Summerbell CD, Higgins JPT, Inequity in Obesity Prevention Trialists Collaborative Group [includes **Seguin-Fowler RA**]. *Do the effects of interventions aimed at the prevention of childhood obesity reduce inequities? A re-analysis of randomized trial data from two Cochrane reviews*. medRxiv. 2024:2024-06. DOI: 10.1101/2024.06.10.2430837

Hanson KL, Marshall GA, Graham ML, Villareal DL, Volpe LC, **Seguin-Fowler RA**. *Identifying and removing fraudulent attempts to enroll in a human health improvement intervention in rural communities*. *Methods Protoc*. 2024;7(6):93. DOI: 10.390/mps/7060093

Maddock JE, Perry CK, **Seguin-Fowler RA**, Diekman NF, Currier J, Winkle J, Lenstra N, Franklin H. *Is Walk Score a useful tool for measuring walkability in rural communities?* *J Rural Health*. 2024 Nov 9. DOI: 10.1111/jrh.12895

**MacMillan Uribe AL**. Why Early Career Researchers Should Engage in the Peer Review Process. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. 2024; 56(10): 680. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2024.08.005>

Karra P, Hardikar S, Winn M, Anderson G, Haaland B, Shadyab AH, Neuhouser ML, **Seguin-Fowler RA**, Thomson CA, Coday M, Wactawski-Wende J, Stefanick ML, Zhang X, Cheng TYD, Karanth S, Sun Y, Saquib N, Pichado MS, Jung SY, Tabung FK, Summers SA, Holland WL, Jalili T, Gunter M, Playdon MC. Metabolic phenotype and risk of obesity-related cancers in the Women's Health Initiative. *Cancer Prev Res*. 2024. DOI: 10.1158/1940-6207.CAPR-24-0082

Faul CB, Jilcott Pitts S, Calloway E, Seligman H, Reis H, Webb Cherry C, Hatsu IE, Babatunde OT, **MacMillan Uribe AL**, McGuirt JT, Seguin-Fowler RA. A Meta-Ethnography to Determine Critical Constructs of Nutrition Security. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

## Happy Holidays!

Send your news to [bea.bradley@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto:bea.bradley@agnet.tamu.edu) to be included in the next Nutrition newsletter!