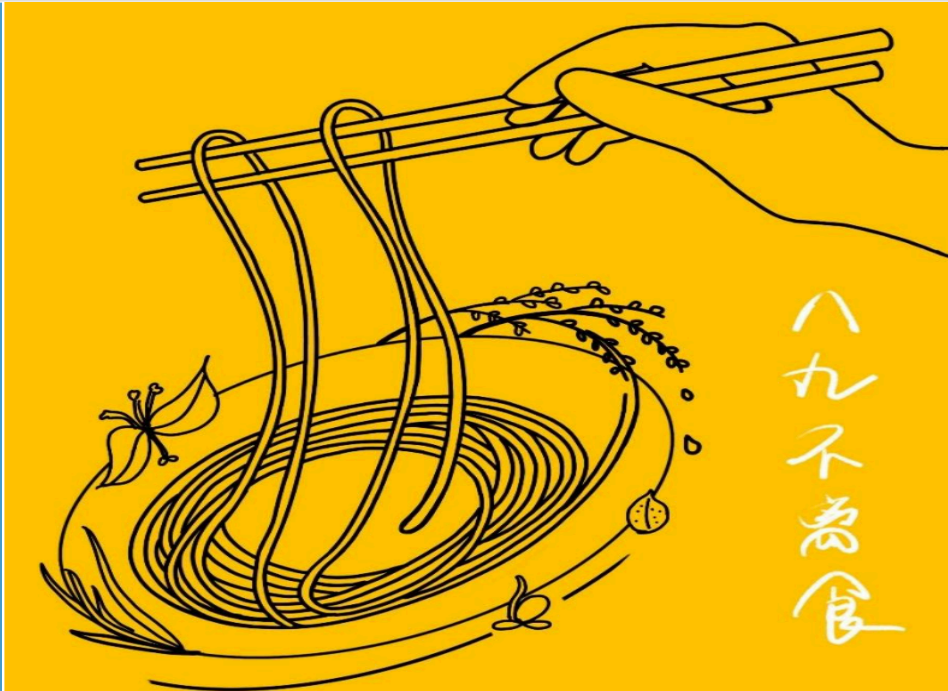


FALL  
2021

NUTRITION NEWSLETTER

# THE GRAPEVINE

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



Podcast Logo for Ximalaya

Opinion

## I PARTICIPATED IN THE UN FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT, OVER 300 GROUPS BOYCOTTED IT LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE SUMMIT ON GLOBAL FOOD GOVERNANCE

BY: CINDY (LUYUE) ZHENG

As we have all become aware, the pandemic has shown a spotlight on the fragility of our increasingly globalized food system. I was thrilled to hear that the UN Food System Summit (UNFSS) aims to unite everyone to [“transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food”](#).

On Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>, after an 18-month engaging process, UNFSS was held in New York City with over 51,000 people joining virtually from 193 countries. However, there has also been powerful global resistance to the UNFSS with more than 300 civil society organizations and

Indigenous groups boycotting the event. Concerns they voiced center on the widespread corporate power that shaped the summit’s initiatives and a lack of community-centered and People’s right approach. My work experience related to the UNFSS supports these criticisms.

In April 2021, I was hired by Good Food Fund and joined China Action Hub, a newly created platform by this Chinese NGO to channel information about the UNFSS in Chinese society.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni and Staff,

What a whirlwind of a year it has been! As I am writing this letter to you, one word keeps ringing into my ears: grief. The past couple of years has been, if anything, monumental for us in many ways. We all have been grief-stricken in our way for the loss of loved ones, friendship or relationship, ecological and sociopolitical distress, or disenfranchised grief, a loss we don't often accredit enough: the absence of social relationship or normalcy, disruptions to our routines, etc.

[“We say depression and anxiety are conditions of the mind, while grief is a condition of the heart.”](#) And, it indeed speaks to me because, in the moments of indescribable pain and chaos, I realized I needed to allow myself to feel it with full authenticity even though it's easier said than done.

Ever since the February 2021 military coup in my home country, Myanmar (Burma), every day I have been feeling anxious about my family and friends' safety and overwhelmed with the political violence and food issues back home. Unfortunately, with the recent tragic loss of my family member to state violence, things have been even more disheartening. However, amidst these crises, I realize how food signifies a sense of community, generosity, and humility we have for each other. Some of the few moments that have helped me navigate these challenging times were: having lunch and laughter with friends between classes, exploring a new vegan food place with Emma Gangbar in East Harlem which she wrote about in this issue, enriching moments at the Healthnuts events, and cooking virtually with my mom. I also found a sense of comfort in savoring Burmese chicken curry and a diverse array of flavorful dishes my friends made: bún riêu, spicy tteokbokki, braised ribs, Szechuan fish fillet, and red bean pastry. These are the moments I feel nourished and grounded.

As we witness the rise of global food insecurity, chronic illnesses, and malnutrition due to climate crises, humanitarian crises, and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, I realize our work and role as nutrition educators and public health professionals is more crucial now than ever. We must integrate nutrition education as a public health intervention and combat these crises. The interdependence of food justice and food sovereignty with these ecological, sociopolitical, and health disparities have shown us that communal care and community empowerment must be at the center as we navigate these changes, chaos, and uncertainties.

As a result, I want the Grapevine to be a safe and creative space for us to express our thoughts and feelings through storytelling, learning from each other's inspirational work and dreams, and nurturing collective healing. In this issue, you will find an enriching conversation Mirel Grossman had with Jerianne Cusipag, who is the recipient of the AND Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group Diversity Scholarship. Jerianne shared her love for food and experience working as an RD in Doha.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The op-ed piece, written by Cindy (Luyue) Zheng highlights the fragility of our globalized food system as she painstakingly evaluated the UN Food System Summit through the critical lens of social and food justice. Furthermore, regardless of how difficult the situation is, one thing that we are all capable of is being there for each other and being resilient. In the collection of summaries for the “2021 SNEB conference: Raising Reliance and Resilience”, you will find how nutrition educators and public health professionals from diverse disciplines are exploring and building resilience through trauma, food justice, and incorporating equity to research, policy, and practice.

Additionally, I have seen how our TC nutrition community has manifested such strength and resilience in many ways through the laughter we shared with our friends when we were back on campus or when we welcomed our first cohort of integrated MS-RDN students. This issue has some profiles of a few of these truly remarkable students. We also shared our support and love as we celebrated some long-standing professors in our program: the retirement of Dr. Isobel Contento during her final class teaching this Fall 2021, and the final semester Dr. Joan Gussow taught Nutritional Ecology. As we are all dedicating our hard work, time, and energy to creating a more just and sustainable food and nutrition system, I hope you have a moment to enjoy and appreciate the art of making food that Teresa Xu and Alison Garbarini beautifully illustrated through their favorite recipe pieces.

As I humbly share this role with you as an editor for our Grapevine Newsletter and carry the legacy of our amazing former editors, I want to thank all the incredible writers who contributed to this issue. I also want to thank all my friends and faculty who have graciously supported me with love and patience during these difficult times. I wish everyone finds sacredness in life as we nurture regenerative culture through our presence and collective healing.



Thu Thu May Oo

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thu Thu May Oo".

Editor-in-Chief

*In this most difficult time,  
you may not be feeling it but I  
am sending love to your soul,  
hope to your will to live on, to  
rest your heart and head before  
you get back up  
to continue and above all,  
to thrive.*

*In this most difficult time,  
you may be thinking the  
universe is not giving us a  
break  
but one tragic thing after the  
next.  
you are afraid you may be  
desensitized for, at times, you  
feel numb and unresponsive.  
But I ensure you, you are not.*

*You are filled with compassion  
and love.  
You are being loved and  
capable of loving.  
You are capable of receiving  
forgiveness  
not from anyone else but  
yourself.*

*You are, most of all, the  
universe,  
The universe where we all  
need to thrive.*

*Thu Thu May Oo*



## Fresh Off the Vine: Events and Announcements

**HealthNuts Update:** Thanks to everyone who attended our events over the past year.

Save-the-Date for **Virtual Alumni Panel:**  
Thursday, February 3, 2022. 7:00 - 8:30 PM EST.  
Stay tuned for more info in the Weekly Updates!  
Please email us at [healthnutsevents@gmail.com](mailto:healthnutsevents@gmail.com) or  
Thanh Thanh directly at [tn2423@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:tn2423@tc.columbia.edu)  
if you have any questions.

Follow us on Instagram [@tc\\_columbia\\_nutrition](https://www.instagram.com/tc_columbia_nutrition)

### Announcements:

Meet Dr. Sara Abiola PhD, JD - New Executive Director of the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy! Dr. Abiola is teaching HBSV 4014 Community Nutrition this spring.



## SUPPORT YOUR TC PEERS AND COMMUNITY

See below for a few ways that you can connect with and support your peers.

**Check out the nutrition education podcast led by Cindy (Luyue) Zheng, MS NEP, Dietetic Intern and Chinese youth leaders in the field of nutrition and public health:**  
[Link](#)

Previous guest-speakers include our TC students and alumni: Yintong Zheng (MPH candidate), Fei Han (MS Graduated in 2020), Qianhui (Jera) Zhang (PhD candidate), Weiqian (Rothy) Hu (MS Graduated in 2020) and Wanqi (Tina) Jing (MEd candidate).



*Art by Irene Rinaldi for the New York Times*

Have your own business or project that you would like to have featured? Email a description to [grapevineditor@gmail.com](mailto:grapevineditor@gmail.com)

## I participated in the UN Food System Summit: *Continued*

Aiming to increase youth engagement in food system transformation, the China Action Hub's main focus is to shift dietary patterns at the consumer end, promoting eating and choosing plant-based food and products among youth. This aligns with the NGO's mission and the NGO founder's role in the UNFSS, as deputy co-lead of "work stream I" on "food environments" in [Action Track \(AT\) 2](#).

In my very first team meeting, I noticed a lack of transparency in the decision-making structure of the UNFSS. I was suspicious of the selection process of AT leaders, as the founder of this Beijing-based NGO is the only representative from China in all five ATs. Response from my manager to my inquiry on how the founder got the "job" is telling: "I really don't know how he got the formal role. He announced it in a meeting but details were never disclosed". A haunting question thus came to my mind: Is the UNFSS really a "people's summit" if the leadership team fails to ensure inclusivity in its structure? As I suspected, agroecology advocates I know from a Beijing-based smallholder farmers supporting group (FoodThink 食通社) show little interest in participating in the summit.

My position at the China Action Hub had the potential to strengthen communication with marginalized groups and lift their voices in this high-level event. But, conflicts of interest shown in the summit multi-stakeholder process, where power dynamics were ignored and dominant stakeholder (agribusiness) drives the agenda, have fundamentally undermined civil society participation. People from the FoodThink group had significant concern on the

accountability of the summit participation structure, let alone its outcomes. During my 4-months of work in China Action Hub, I made many propositions to invite representatives from the community of farmers and farmworkers, to bring in diverse voices and ideas. However, I sadly learned that representation is considered secondary to the number of attendees. Therefore, unfortunately, the events held by my team eventually failed to attract

invited stakeholders who are in more powerful positionality in the food system compared with peasants, farmworkers, and delivery people. Due to this, the claimed game-changing solutions generated in our report, are more market-based.

My disappointment also comes from a lack of a detailed monitor and evaluation mechanism. As Molly Anderson, the William R. Kenan Professor of Food Studies at



Cover of the Independent Dialogue Cindy curated

#SummitDialogues  
@foodsystems

and get support from people in local sustainable agriculture coalition groups.

Close scrutiny of core partners of my organization (Good Food Fund) discloses a potential conflict of interest from the Rockefeller Foundation and EAT forum. Ironically, we can easily invite speakers from international organizations/institutes to talk about our events but not see the names of local agroecology groups in the flyer. To me, it explicitly demonstrates a system of privilege and a "top-down" structure in the UNFSS. It is sad to admit that the UNFSS dialogue, "[Visions for a Wet Market Transformation](#)", I curated was self-applauded by the

Middlebury College, highlighted in [the virtual Urban Food Policy Forum](#), the summit outcomes are in fact commitments by governments and coalitions without clear obligations. I was hoping for a mandated commitment (i.e., regulatory support) from the Chinese government to help advance food system transformation after the summit ends. However, at this point, I am still confused about how the dialogue outputs would be used, who would review my submitted dialogue report, and what regulatory support our project can get from this high-level event.

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A 3-day **counter-summit** hosted by the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty, alongside 21 other groups. We say to the UNFSS and its big business patrons, "Not in our name!"

One week before the UNFSS, FoodThink posted an article reporting global resistance to UNFSS, which clearly states their position towards the first-ever UNFSS. Their key message is perfectly described by the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty: "We say to the UNFSS and its big business patrons, "Not in our name!". I can now better understand why the FoodThink group had zero interest in cooperating with the China Action Hub. Our team, unfortunately, failed to include the voices of active members of the FoodThink group.

Similar to the FoodThink's work on guiding people to learn sustainable food system, as project manager for the Good Food Fund, I initiated the [nutrition education podcast](#) to help improve the public's eco-literacy and to shift from a simplistic viewpoint on food, nutrition, and health. Since many young people I interacted with found building an equitable

food system a novel concept, I started realizing that Chinese people have had few places to obtain contextualized and in-depth discussion on food topics. Therefore, I decided to deliver insights through a Podcast which was presented through a conversational approach. And, it was so much fun to have friends from our Program in Nutrition join as guests. Having input from TC alumni means a lot to me. Together we are helping people in China connect dots between individual health, and planetary health, while inspiring them to rethink factors (i.e., digital technology, cultural beliefs) that constantly shape our food choice.

My team agrees that a special episode discussing the criticism of UNFSS is necessary. Based on my own working experience, I would like to highlight the following lessons we can learn from this summit:

- Distinguish the difference between multistakeholderism and

multilateralism. The UNFSS follows a multistakeholderism framework which puts on an equal footing private sector actors, farmers, government, and NGOs. Instead, multilateralism guides people to acknowledge power and legitimacy imbalance when making each decision.

- Strengthen local community support by uniting marginalized groups, researchers, NGOs in an opaque process
- Keep a critical eye on the structure and outcomes of events even if those events are global and entitled to be inclusive
- Stay informed of work from [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#)
- Denounce 'green washing' and 'co-optation' attempts

We can and we shall do better for a livable future for all.

**INTERVIEW WITH JERIANNE CUSIPAG**  
**FROM SERVING AS AN RD IN DOHA TO WORKING TOWARDS TRANSFORMING**  
**TO A HEALTHIER FOOD ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENCE IN**  
**THE PHILIPPINES, THIS GLOBAL SCHOLAR IS PAVING HER WAY THROUGH**  
**TC'S NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

BY MIREL GROSSMAN

**Jerianne Cusipag** is the recipient of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group Diversity Scholarship who is currently pursuing an MEd in Community Nutrition Education. Jerianne is originally from Manila, Philippines. She received her undergraduate degree in Nutrition and postgraduate Master of International Health degree with a major in Health Promotion from the University of the Philippines. She used to work as a dietitian in Hamad Medical Corporation, a leading hospital in Doha, Qatar, in the Middle East.



**MG: Welcome to TC! Can you please tell me a little bit about your academic background?**

JC: I went to The University of the Philippines where I earned my Bachelor's of Nutrition. There, I learned a great baseline for clinical nutrition, but I wanted more knowledge in counseling and public health. In 2019 I got a Master's of International Health with a major in Health Promotion. I believe that nutrition should be focused on the prevention and modification of long-term behaviors, which is why I decided to

apply to TC's Nutrition Education Program. This is the only graduate program that I applied to, and I'm very grateful for the opportunity.

**MG: What kind of experience do you have as an RD?**

JC: I worked for 8 years in an acute care hospital setting in Doha, Qatar at Hamad Medical Corporation. I learned a lot from the diverse population in Qatar, one of the most interesting aspects was learning about diverse menu planning to appeal to the preferences of the different expatriates. It was also there that I became passionate about preventative medicine. I hate seeing people in the hospital. There are so many diseases, such as diabetes, that could have been prevented with proper education.

**MG: What inspired you to go back to school and pursue a Nutrition Education degree at TC?**

JC: There is not a lot of awareness for public health in the Philippines. A nutrition degree there is viewed as more of a clinical degree, so I'm excited to learn more about the behavioral aspects of nutrition. I believe that the educational system in the Philippines needs reformation since children are not sufficiently taught about forming healthy eating habits. I feel like I would have an easier time with my eating patterns as an adult had my education been better as a child.

**MG: Can you tell me a little bit about nutrition in the Philippines?**

JC: There aren't any school lunches in the Philippines. Children bring food from home and eat a lot of processed foods such as white rice, hotdogs, spam, nuggets, and sweetened pork. People there don't believe that children should be on diets. The mentality is that if a child has big cheeks and round arms, it is a sign of health, and they don't limit a child's diet. Another issue is that there is an influx of imported processed snacks and cereals in the cities. However, they have begun to have more awareness for public health and have recently passed a bill to ban trans fats in manufactured foods.

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## COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT: UPTOWN VEG, EAST HARLEM, NEW YORK

BY EMMA GANGBAR



Thu Thu and I met up outside campus on a sunny fall Tuesday afternoon and bussed 15 minutes from campus to try a new restaurant for the both of us - Uptown Veg. Upon walking in, I realized that it was a casual buffet-style vegan joint where you could choose as few or as many colourful dishes as you wished and your plate was weighed at the end. I feasted my eyes on the seemingly endless mouth-watering gluten-free options made from all organic fruits and vegetables, natural juices & shakes, and delicious-looking pastries!

After some deliberation, we both ordered a similar variation of soy stir fry chicken, soy bbq drumstick, candied yams, rice and peas, and mixed grilled vegetables infused with Caribbean spices. For drinks, I purchased a Peanut Punch nut milk style drink and Thu Thu, went for the soursop juice. In under five minutes, we had our meals in hand ready to eat!

There is limited seating in the restaurant so we happily carried our meal just steps away to Marcus Garvey Park and found a comfortable bench across from the vibrant jungle gym to enjoy our veggie-forward meal. With music playing and kids happily running around in the background, Thu Thu and I ate

and chatted about what brought us to The Program in Nutrition at Teachers College, Columbia University. One reason we chose to dine at Uptown Veg, a local Harlem business, is because it directly invests in the local economy, preserves a one-of-a-kind business with character, and contributes to a more unified neighbourhood.

Additionally, as many of us know, eating plant-based is often much less energy, water, and land-intensive than a meat-based diet. As I learned more about Uptown Veg, I discovered that it is a black-owned family restaurant that has been serving the Harlem community nourishing food for over 25 years. Beyond their physical location, this 100% vegan joint is also active throughout NYC and participated in the latest Harlem Block Party, Vegandale Festival, and catering events. Eating at Uptown Veg is simply a 'feel good' meal.



Back to the food - Every part of my lunch I enjoyed, particularly the soy drumstick! It was flavourful, aromatic, and just chewy enough. Though I ordered a mish-mash of vibrant dishes, each taste complemented the other wonderfully. Next time I go to Uptown Veg, I definitely want to try their yuca mac & cheese and soy veggie burger with all of the fix-ins! If you're looking to try a new restaurant close to school, I recommend Uptown Veg for both plant-based and carnivores, alike. For those living in Brooklyn, a second





# New Student Notes

*On behalf of The Grapevine and the Program in Nutrition, we would like to extend a warm welcome to the new students in fall 2021 which include the first cohort of our new Integrated MS-RDN Track.*

**Adriana Carrieri:** Originally from São Paulo, Brazil, Adriana attended the University of São Paulo, Brazil where she completed a Bachelor's Degree in Nutrition and a Residency in Clinical Nutrition. Andriana is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Behavioral Nutrition. In her free time, she loves to cook and enjoy food with friends and family. Her professional interest includes promoting a better quality of life through food and nutrition to general people and critical patients.

**Claire Holmes:** Originally from Wainscott, New York, Claire graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering at Lehigh University. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. Claire is currently serving as the student administrator for NYC Nutrition Education Network, (NYCNEN).

**Emma Gangbar:** Originally from Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Emma attended the University of British Columbia where she completed a Bachelor of Science in Global Resource Systems. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition and Public Health. Emma loves running and has done the Santa Rosa Marathon as well as many other half marathons across Canada and the United States!

**Jerianne Cusipag:** Originally from Manila, the Philippines, Jerianne attended the University of the Philippines where she completed her undergraduate in Nutrition as well as postgraduate in Master of International Health in Health Promotion. She is currently pursuing a Master of Education (MEd) in Community Nutrition Education. Jerianne used to work as a dietitian in Hamad Medical Corporation, a leading hospital in Qatar and in the Middle East.

**Julia Klosk:** Originally from Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, Julia completed a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. Julia has a particular interest in the intersection of nutrition and psychology and has interned for private practices focused on disordered eating and/or eating disorders.

**Kylie Anne Martins:** Originally from Goa, India, Kylie attended the University of San Francisco where she completed a Bachelor's in Biology and minors in Chemistry and Neuroscience. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. In her free time, Kylie enjoys baking, playing tennis, traveling, and learning about new cultures and their food.

**Nabeeha Khan:** Originally from Orange County, California, Nabeeha attended the University of California, Los Angeles where she completed a Bachelor's Degree in Nutrition, Health, and Society. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. In her free time, Nabeeha likes to read, do yoga, drink matcha, and practice making pottery.

**Oliver Gonzalez-Yoakum:** Originally from San Francisco, California, Oliver attended Tufts University where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Biology. He is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. When Oliver was 11, he danced for the Golden State Warriors basketball team at halftime! (If you Youtube "Warriors Jr. Jam Squad" and find videos from 2008, you might see a familiar face!)

**Sofia Nersessova:** Originally from Richmond, Virginia, Sofia attended Virginia Commonwealth University where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition Education. Sofia is Russian-Armenian and her family resides in Moscow, Russia where she usually travels 1-2 times per year.

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## New Student Notes: *Continued*

**Vivian Anigbogu:** Originally from San Diego, California, Vivian attended the University of California, Los Angeles where she completed a Bachelor's degree in Human Biology and Society with a minor in Public Health. She is pursuing a MEd in Community Nutrition Education. Vivian has been practicing yoga for over 7 years which she started after tearing her ACL in 2014. Ever since then, yoga has become her physical and mental therapy.

**Xin Rong Yeo:** Originally from Malaysia, Xin attended the University of Adelaide, South Australia where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Science and Education. Xin also completed MA in Teaching from New York University. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition Education. Xin was a middle and high school Science teacher in San Francisco. She is a huge advocate for food justice and environmental science education at schools, and she is passionate about curriculum writing.

**Yujia Zhang:** Originally from Xiamen, China, Yujia attended the University of California, San Diego where she completed a Bachelor's degree in Physiology and Neuroscience. She is currently enrolled in the MS-RDN program in Nutrition and Public Health. Yujia loves video gaming, specifically League of Legends. She has met many friends by playing this game, and it has taught her a lot of life lessons.

*Additionally, please join us in welcoming Ibrahim Bensouda, Sheba Bergman-Golden, Yide Cai, Yuxi Chen, Jayne Cudia, Lauren Decunto, Elizabeth Eilender, Xiaoge (Fiona) Gao, Alison Garbarini, Allison Kaye, Shuowei Li, Stephanie Lim, Nadia Mowszowski, Anokhi Nanavaty, Emily Ocon, Serena Pratt, Zihua Qu, Shannon Paige Scott, Frayada Sherman, Sara Subhani, Ye Sun, Maelee Sutton, Zhen Tian, Muyuan (Randy) Wang, Wen Yuan Wang, Chun-Ling Wu, Teresa Xu, Xinyi (Nancy) Xu, Qiyu Yang, and Hao Shao, Hao Tang and Eran Li who are currently in the Dietetic Internship Program and newly admitted to the Master of Education Program in Community Nutrition.*

## Interview with Jerianne Cusipag: *Continued*

**MG: What are your future professional goals?**

JC: I want to work on building a nutrition education curriculum for children and adolescence in the Philippines. I want to be involved in teaching them things such as cooking healthy food, growing food through exposure to gardens since they live in an urban environment, and using food labels to guide more healthful choices.

**MG: Are there any classes at TC that you feel are preparing you for your goal?**

Food Nutrition and Behavior with Dr. Pam Koch is one of my favorite classes since it focuses on behavioral nutrition. I also like Nutrition and Human Development with Dr. Lora Sporny since there is a lot of research that has come out since I was in school.

**MG: How has your experience been at TC so far?**

JC: I am so happy to be in New York and love being face-to-face with my classmates. The environment on campus when first arriving was infectious. Everyone is very friendly and welcoming, which made me feel at home even though I am an international student. I'm also grateful for the mentor program at TC since everyone is eager to help. I feel thankful since studying in the United States has always been a dream of mine.

## THE SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR (SNEB) 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: A COLLECTION OF PROGRAM SUMMARIES

As the theme of the 2021 SNEB conference centered on raising reliance and resilience, nutrition educators and public health professionals from diverse disciplines shared their research and work in exploring and building resilience through trauma, food justice, and incorporating equity to research, policy, and practice. Below, students shared the summary of conference sessions they attended, and the important takeaway they learned from the perspective session. For more information about the program, please visit [here](#).

### **Trauma and Resilience: Food Justice** By Rebecca Valdez, MS RDN

Trauma and Resilience: Food Justice was presented by Genoveva Islas, Founder & CEO of Cultiva La Salud, and Rosalina James, Director of Research and Evaluation at Urban Indian Health Institute. I chose to attend this session because I wanted to learn more about the experiences and injustices that BIPOC face and its impact on the health of their communities. Genoveva and Rosalina's presentations described the history that created disadvantaged communities which continue to affect people today, including the continuous trauma caused by colonization. Colonization's impact includes the loss of land, language, and cultural practice as well as the degradation of natural resources. Today, these communities are still lacking access to healthy foods and are victims of targeted marketing. However, despite these disadvantages, communities of color are using their creativity, leadership, and advocacy to create sustainable food and economic solutions. For example, Genoveva described community initiatives that brought fresh produce into the community including incentives for healthy mobile vendors, a school farm stand, and connecting small stores to local farmers. Rosalina discussed how indigenous people are also connecting with others across the US, sharing their wisdom, and reteaching children about how to grow indigenous foods in balance with nature. Both advocated for public health policies that invest in BIPOC communities that allow the communities to create solutions collectively. The presentations were inspiring and showed how communities are reclaiming their foodways and ancestral wisdom and affecting public policy. We are seeing BIPOC communities rewrite their history, without omitting the suffering caused by colonialism while also creating a new future where they are in charge of the health of their communities.

*Slide decks from CA's Central Valley Food Insecurity in the Land of Abundance*

#### **Our History & Lessons Learned**

Small Store Conversions



School Farm Stands



#### **Pilot Projects & Lessons Learned**

Healthy Mobile Vendors



Community Kitchen



### **Beyond the Food Pantry: Building Resiliency Against Food Insecurity in Higher Education** By Cindy (Luyue) Zheng

My academic interest in food security began when I conducted the Community Nutrition Project at *The Food Pantry at Columbia University*. Since I led the research, investigating the Columbia students' experiences with food insecurity during Covid-19, I was very excited to hear speakers from varying contexts of campuses and to learn effective strategies to support food-insecure students. The average prevalence of food insecurity (FI) on postsecondary education campuses was 32.9%, which is three times higher than the rate for general U.S. households. As a result, designing appropriate interventions is important. A framework all speakers emphasized during the presentation is called "Data + Collaboration = Action". While the on-campus food pantry is the most popular resource (about 70% reported), it was stressed that resilience was built when other popular resources (i.e., community gardens) become more accessible to students.

*Continued on page 12*

## The SNEB 2021 Annual Conference Program Summaries: *Continued*

In addition, the difference between campus cultures will affect the effectiveness of FI interventions. Dr. Zuercher from San Francisco State University explained how an urban, commuter campus can be different from a rural campus in terms of connecting the students. She, therefore, argued the importance of FI-related Needs Assessments. The last speaker, Kendra OoNorasak introduced The Campus Kitchen project and Big Blue Pantry on her campus (University of Kentucky, UK). Notably, the Campus Kitchen project, student-led meal planning, and preparation helps solve food waste by turning it to free healthy meals for food-insecure students. In 2022, the UK will investigate the feasibility of a Pantry vending machine model, which sounds very interesting to me.

### Takeaway messages

- Based on the Social Ecological Model (SEM), it is indicated that the underlying cause of FI has to be addressed by involving interventions at multiple levels (community, political etc.).
- Beyond Food Pantry means changing institutional policies (i.e., dining hours), food literacy/culinary education, transportation (on campus, off campus), banking/access to funds.
- Building partnerships create more resilient food-secure environments.



*Big Blue Pantry. Pete Comparing for University of Kentucky*

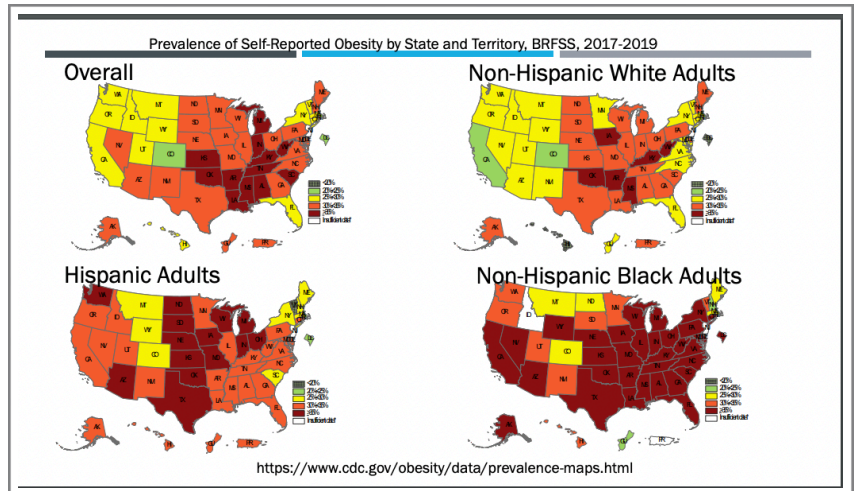
## **The Risk of Homemade Infant Formulas – Perspectives from the Field, Research, and Practice in Response to Recent Formula Shortages** By Sheba Bergman

Today, infant formulas are highly regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Infant Formula Act of 1980. Homemade infant formulas, on the other hand, are not regulated or tested, can lead to severe dietary deficiencies (e.g. hypocalcemia) and negative health outcomes (e.g. intestinal bleeding). The FDA, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Women Infant and Children Program (WIC), and the American Academy of Pediatrics all warn against the use of homemade infant formulas. In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic led to grocery store restocking challenges that impacted infant formula availability, due to consumer hoarding (not due to supply chain deficiencies). Additionally, fear of going into stores also impacted the ability of families to get commercially available infant formulas. The situation has been further compounded by the disproportionate exclusion of women with children from the workforce during the Covid-19 pandemic. The data about the infant feedings during the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2019 survey at the WIC centers showed key findings: 1) The majority of both mothers (51%) and caregivers (58%) do not view homemade infant formulas as risky. 2) Pediatricians are regarded as the most important information source when it comes to infant feeding. 3) Most mothers feel judged regardless of their choice of breastfeeding or formula feeding. 4) Most mothers opposed restricting information on infant formulas. Additionally, data demonstrated that the majority of mothers and caregivers use a combination of breast milk and infant formula, and that breast milk is increasingly used, in particular among WIC families. Farryl Bertmann, Ph.D., RDN presented the three key drivers for individuals seeking homemade infant formulas: 1) Healthism - the notion that commercial infant formulas are not acceptable/healthy; 2) Food insecurity - lack of availability of commercial infant formulas, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic; and 3) Cultural practices. The information about homemade infant formulas is being sourced online (including social media platforms) as well as through family and friends. Nutrition professionals should approach infant feeding in an inclusive, non-judgmental way and look to prevent, detect and remedy homemade infant formula use.

*Continued on page 13*

**George M. Briggs Science Symposium: Accelerating Progress by Incorporating Equity into Obesity Prevention Research, Policy, and Practice** By Xin Rong Yeo

As a registered dietitian-to-be and a nutrition educator, I am passionate about not only food, medical, and nutritional knowledge, but also understanding their relationships with the latest public policy and research. This session serves as a great stepping stone for me in my learning journey! Dr. Shiriki Kumanyika presented her collective findings on the topic of “accelerating progress by incorporating equity lenses into obesity prevention research, policy, and practice” at the George M. Briggs Science Symposium. She highlighted studies that show prevalence of obesity is much higher for Black adults than white adults and this is true across income and educational levels. Dr. Kumanyika proclaimed, “Health inequities are embedded in societal inequities.” Health equity means that everyone deserves to have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Many underlying factors, contribute to health inequities particularly among the ethnic minority, low-income, marginalized groups include poverty and discrimination, which are mainly driven by government policies. Dr. Kumanyika underscored her Getting to Equity Framework, with an intentional focus on equity in undertaking policy, system, and environmental change strategies. Her framework includes four different types of interventions: increase healthy options, reduce deterrents, build on community capacity, and improve social and economic resources. Combining these interventions will create synergies within the approaches to promote health equity and chronic disease prevention. The Keynote session concluded with urgent calls for interventions that centered around collaboration with community members and leveraging community assets in reducing disparities in child and adult obesity in our community.



*Slide deck from George M. Briggs Science Symposium*

**“Examining Race, Privilege, and Bias in Formal Education and its Impact on Real-World Community Health and Nutrition Education”** By Jerianne Cusipag

As an incoming international and Asian student, I was interested to see and hear about the diversity of our profession. Nutrition is about food and eating- one that is greatly influenced by cultural norms and practices. The 2021 SNEB conference was a great avenue for learning about race, privilege, and bias in formal education and its impact on real-world community health and nutrition education.

Kristen DiFilippo, the moderator of this session, raised a question about how we could diversify the nutrition workforce when 93% are female and 82% are Caucasian. Dr. Jody Vogelzang suggested that tenured professors should be teaching the first-year students to start the engagement and commitment to diversify the profession early in their nutrition career. Maggie Ramos echoed her sentiment and that there should be a support system specifically for students who are adding the needed diversity to our profession. Amelia Huelskamp emphasized that when dietitians and nutrition educators work with communities they should not assume what people need to know. On the contrary, building relationships with the people in the communities we serve is critically important for effective nutrition education. Raquel Perez added that language is very important in promoting diversity and that we should be using culturally relevant recipes to break down the structural racism in the field.

There should be a culture shift to fully celebrate and embrace diversity and inclusion. This is a process and can only happen with support from everyone in our organizations. This investment takes time and effort and needs to be a continued priority to be successful in breaking down structural racism.

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## The SNEB 2021 Annual Conference Program Summaries: *Continued*

### **Improving Nutrition-Related Behaviors for Patients and Populations Through Nutrition Literacy Assessment** By Lauren Decunto

In this session, the speakers focused on nutrition literacy, defined as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand nutrition information and skills needed to make appropriate nutrition decisions” (Silk, 2007). Both speakers presented the assessment of nutrition literacy using the Nutrition Literacy Assessment instrument (NLit). Dr. Juliana Camargo led a study on the pregnant Latino population in the United States. Latinos make up 18% of the U.S. population, are among the most impoverished communities in the country, and have one of the highest rates of nutrition-related chronic diseases. “Dietary acculturation”, the process of adopting the eating patterns and food choices of their new environment, may reflect Latinos’ poor dietary habits. The study focused on Latinas during pregnancy, who faced challenges in understanding and interpreting dietary recommendations and adjusting to foods in a new environment. For instance, most of the women in the studies showed a likelihood of poor nutrition literacy. The second part of Dr. Camargo’s presentation was based on a study in the countries of Colombia and Brazil in South America. She proposed that nutrition literacy may help to reduce obesity and improve diet and health; her studies reflected that women in these countries had slightly better nutrition literacy than men, but overall poor nutrition literacy.

Dr. Marchello’s presentation was based on applying nutrition literacy assessments into clinical dietetics practice. His studies indicated that RDs relied on subjective assessments, which can lead to missed opportunities for detecting literacy. When implementing NLit into five outpatient clinics, where 17-19 patients in each clinic were surveyed, the results indicated that multiple behaviors improved in the intervention arm, regardless of nutrition literacy improvements. Behaviors improved by decreasing occurrences of eating less healthful foods, and not just by adding healthful foods.

### **Nutrition Emergencies: Lessons Learned & Opportunities Moving Forward** By Thu Thu May Oo

The session provides well-rounded information and knowledge about the natural disasters in the US and their intersections with food system disruptions and food insecurity, the facilitators, and barriers to ensure federal nutrition assistance and nutrition education during or after natural disasters and other emerging food system disruptions. The panelists from diverse work and education sectors also share multidisciplinary approaches taken by national, tribal, state, and local governments to provide nutrition security which means “having consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being and prevent (and if needed, treat) disease, particularly among our nation’s most socially disadvantaged populations.” For instance, the American Red Cross Team partnered with nonprofits and private businesses to provide disaster feeding—fixed or mobile operations—in evacuation shelters with pre-positioned shelf-stable meals and snacks, and longer-term disaster shelters will all-day snacks and daily meals for the families and individuals.

Dr. Lauren Clay and Uriyoan Colon-Ramos shared their collaborative research on the disruptions of the food environment due to various natural disasters such as hurricanes and the Covid-19 pandemic, and the experience of the individuals and families coping with food and nutrition insecurity due to these disasters. The research showed that households with children, headed by single women,

Black, Hispanic, and low-income households are at increased risk for food insecurity in the US. From my personal experience and observation earlier in the Covid-19 pandemic as well as from the survey data collected in Puerto Rico during Covid-19 shared by Uriyoan, it was very intriguing to learn about people’s disruptive behavior such as buying or hoarding more food due to fear or anxiety when coping the natural disaster. Furthermore, it was very interesting to find out that the majority of the survey respondents in Puerto Rico (94% out of 1300 participants) were more aware of food being wasted since the pandemic.

*Slide deck from 2021-SNEB-Conference-Opening-and-Concluding-Fleischbacher*



*Spicy Black Bean Chicken Enchiladas with Pumpkin Sour Cream Sauce*

BY TERESA XU

Growing up, my family exposed me to all different foods and cuisines. Most fortunately for me, my mother was a phenomenal cook, so I never learned to dislike specific foods. For school lunches, I would bring anything from hand-pulled Chinese noodles to homemade pizza to pork belly. I was endlessly ridiculed because my lunches were fragrant, messy, and unusual. As an adult, I am still unafraid to try anything once. I love to embrace new foods and new cuisines, without judgment. If I won the lottery, I would travel the world just to taste new foods and learn new cooking styles. I leave my doubts outside of the kitchen, so I can freely experiment with unusual food combinations, substitutions, modifications, and even eliminations. I joke to my friends that I refuse to purchase sugar at the grocery store, but this is not far from reality. I purchase cane sugar about once a year; it will be used for a few recipes, and most of it ends up getting trashed after sitting out too long. This recipe for Spicy Black Bean Chicken Enchiladas with Pumpkin Sour Cream Sauce is one of my favorites to modify and “health-ify”. There is endless potential for adaptation in this recipe – I even discovered that topping the enchiladas with pineapple enhances the sweetness of the pumpkin!

I love cooking not just because of what it produces, but because it inspires so much creativity in my day. Planning out my next recipe is therapeutic; it brings me so much joy to think through a recipe and more importantly, to think through potential modifications to a recipe. When I am planning my meals for the week, I can feel the gears in my brain gain enthusiasm. As a lifelong athlete (swimmer turned marathon runner turned triathlete turned CrossFitter), the number one question that guides my cooking is “How can I make this healthier?”. I eat not just for health, but for performance and for recovery. I want maximum bang for my buck, so I want to increase nutrient density generally by increasing whole foods and decreasing added oils, sugars, and processed ingredients. I am fortunate to not have any food allergies or intolerances, so I have maximum freedom to modify recipes with only flavor and nutritional value in mind.

I use this recipe ([link](#)) as a starting off point, but just like in Monopoly, as soon as I leave “Go,” there is endless potential for the recipe to evolve. Every recipe has the potential to be healthier and more nutrient-dense, even a recipe for macaroni and cheese. I know that the last statement does not sound appealing, but healthy does not equal tasteless or bland. When you gain

nutrients, you do not have to lose flavor or texture, but this often requires a substantial amount of trial and error. My best advice to the new cook? Don’t bring your doubt into the kitchen. Be open to new flavors, textures, and combinations. If I tell you that banana bread can be made just as successfully without added sugars, don’t doubt it until you have tried to do it.

To this day, I have never followed a recipe exactly as written. I always add my personal touch, with health in mind.



*Chicken Enchiladas with Pumpkin Sour Cream Sauce/  
Photo credit Ambitious Kitchen*

*Continued on page 16*

BY: TERESA XU

## Spicy Black Bean Chicken Enchiladas with Pumpkin Sour Cream Sauce

### Ingredients

#### For pumpkin sour cream sauce:

- 1 (15 ounces) can pumpkin puree
- 1 (14.5 ounces) can tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup low-fat sour cream (you can substitute coconut milk or plant-based yogurt for a vegan option.)
- 1/3 cup water or low sodium chicken broth
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons chili powder\* (not necessary but it will bring out a distinct southwestern flavor to the dish)
- 2 teaspoons of cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon red cayenne pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste

Note: None of the spices in this recipe are essential, but all are easily adjustable depending on your tastes. The chili powder and cumin together will give you that distinctive “enchilada” flavor, but you can eliminate the spices without sacrificing quality or quantity. I have made the enchiladas with these spices, without spices at all, and with garlic and onion powder in place of chili and cumin.

#### For filling:

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 white onion, diced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced (or as you desire!)
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced

- 2-3 cups cooked and shredded chicken breast (you can substitute with firm tofu for vegan option.)
- 1 (15 ounces) can of black beans, rinsed and drained
- 12 soft corn tortillas (you can also use 6-inch flour tortillas.)
- 2 cups shredded Mexican or Colby jack cheese (for a vegan option, feel free to substitute vegan cheese, nutritional yeast, or even just increase the quantity of the pumpkin sauce that is poured on the tortillas.)
- Salt and pepper to taste

\*Depending on how fully stuffed you like your enchiladas, you can increase or decrease the quantity of filling. I would recommend making the recipe with the quantities as listed and then adjusting the next time you make this recipe. If I have extra filling, I just spread it across the top of the enchiladas, before pouring on the remaining sauce. You can never have too much sauce or too much filling!

\*Top these enchiladas however you like! I often top the enchiladas with my homemade “avocado-mole”, which is the simplest guacamole you have ever made. Mash up a ripe avocado and sprinkle in salt and pepper to taste. Other toppings that I have added include cilantro, pineapple, more pumpkin puree (from the recipe above for homemade pumpkin puree), hemp seeds, cottage cheese, and even hot honey.



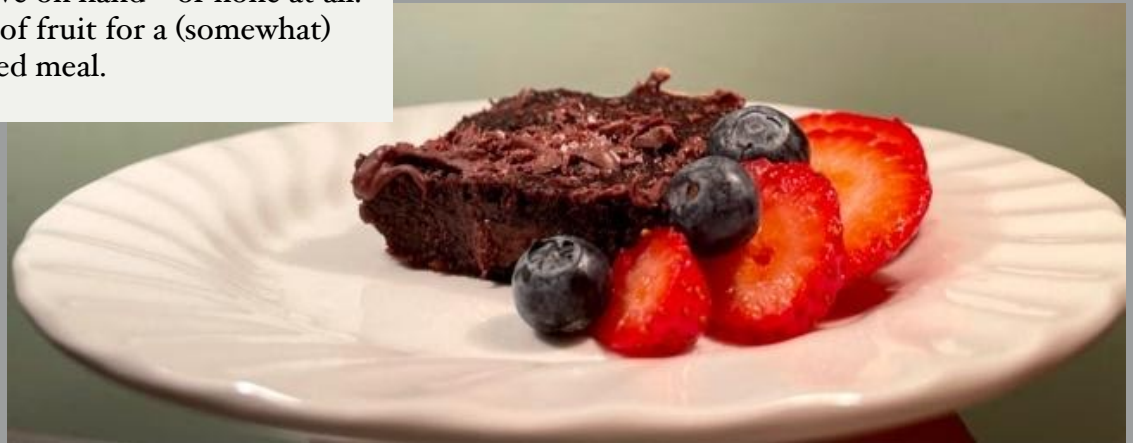
Chicken Enchiladas with Pumpkin Sour Cream Sauce/  
Photo credit Ambitious Kitchen



# RECIPE CORNER: COZY CHOCOLATY SWEETNESS

BY ALISON GARBARINI

After months of pandemic-baking, my sister and I decided to put a spin on our classic brownie recipe. This gluten-free dessert swaps butter for avocado, yielding a healthy dose of Omega-3's. I recommend topping it with a pinch of sea salt, but you can add whatever toppings you have on hand—or none at all. Best served with a side of fruit for a (somewhat) balanced meal.



## Dark Chocolate & Sea Salt Avocado Brownies

### Ingredients

- 1 medium-sized avocado
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 medium-sized eggs
- 8 teaspoons cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips (to melt)
- *Optional: 2/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips (for topping and mix-ins)*
- *Optional: sea salt to taste (for topping and mix-ins)*

### Directions:

1. Grease an 8x8 inch glass baking pan using your favorite cooking spray. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Peel and pit the avocado. Using a fork, mash the avocado until it reaches a spread-like consistency.
3. Combine avocado, maple syrup, vanilla, and eggs. Mix using a beater—or use a food processor for a smoother texture.
4. Melt 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips. Add the melted chocolate to the avocado mix and continue to mix.
5. In a separate bowl, stir together the almond flour, cocoa powder, and baking soda.
6. Add these dry ingredients to the avocado mixture. Mix with a wooden spoon.
7. *Optional mix-ins: Add 1/3 cup whole chocolate chips and a pinch of sea salt (to taste). Continue to mix with a wooden spoon.*
8. Once the batter is thoroughly mixed, pour it into the prepared pan. Bake for about 25 minutes, or until the brownies appear firm.
9. Remove from oven. Let rest 20 minutes and then enjoy!
10. *Optional topping: While brownies are baking, chop 1/3 cup whole chocolate chips into chocolate shavings. Two minutes before removing brownies from the oven, sprinkle brownies with chocolate shavings and sea salt to taste.*