



**IN OUR GRIT,
OUR GLORY.**

DEPARTMENT NEWS

*Updates from the Department of Food Science and Technology
and The Food Processing Center*



From the Desk of Dr. Martini

The semester is almost over, and I want to congratulate the new graduates in the Department. Undergraduate and graduate students have worked very hard to complete their programs and we are very proud of their accomplishments! Please take a moment and join me in congratulating these extraordinary students.

We will have a few events this week to help with graduation festivities. We will start with a Celebration for the 3+1 students on Friday May 16th at 8 am. The event is planned very early in the morning because it will be broadcasted so that family members and friends of our students can join us from a distance. Please come and celebrate with us! This event is followed by a salute to FST graduates at 11 am. This will be a great opportunity to chat with all the students that are graduating and learn about their future endeavors. Lastly, we will join other students from CASNR on the salute to graduates ceremony that will be held on East Campus Union. All these events are open to everybody. Please join us to celebrate our students' accomplishments.

I also want to celebrate and recognize students that are not (yet) graduating and faculty and staff members. We all made it through the year! Congratulations! We would not be able to do this without each one of you! Thank you so much for all you do for the Department.

I don't want to forget to thank everybody that came to the Banquet. It was great to see everybody there and to celebrate the awards and accomplishments of faculty and students! We also learned about 2 scholarships awarded by **IFT Aksarben Section**. Congratulations to Janine Merkle, Axl Rasmussen, and Fatima Madero for being the recipients of the **2025 IFT Aksarben Scholarship!**

This will be the last Newsletter for the academic year, but we will continue to send Newsletters during the Summer so that you don't miss us! Please send us pictures of your adventures during the Summer (internships, new jobs, vacations, etc.) so that we can share with the department and stay in touch with everybody.

I wish you all a great Summer, great internships for those students that are working during the Summer, and awesome off-time. I hope you can re-charge during your time off to start a new academic year full of energy and good vibes!

Silvana



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Welcome to Ashley Hearn

We are thrilled to introduce you to our newest team member, Ashley Hearn, who joins us as the new Tech Support/Communications Associate. Ashley brings 15 years of marketing and graphic design experience, and we are excited to have her on board.

- ♦ **Background:** Ashley has worked as a graphic designer and production artist at RKD Group out of Dallas, TX. She has worked as a Public Information Tech at History Nebraska creating large exhibits for public display. Ashley also worked at Whole Foods supporting the graphic artist with advertising materials, sign production, and quality control.
- ♦ **Role:** Ashley will be helping with tech support, entering IT Tickets, social media campaigns, web design and maintenance, grad and undergrad recruiting materials

We encourage everyone to extend a warm welcome to Ashley and support her as she settles in. Let's make her feel at home and part of our dynamic team.

Welcome aboard, Ashley!





Alumni Newsletter Info

This summer Ashley will be revamping our alumni newsletter. We would like to make it more exciting and fun to read. Our department is filled with incredible stories, achievements, and experiences, and we want to celebrate that and share it with those who have graduated. Some of the things we would like to include will be a message from Dr. Martini, some alumni stories, any upcoming events, department updates, a place to donate, and any volunteer opportunities that they may want to be involved in. We will also have a photo gallery and a spotlight on an alumni businesses.

If you have any content for the alumni newsletter, please send that to Ashley and CC Susie. We will also open it up for alumni to submit any content that they would like to share as well. We are hoping this will strengthen our engagement with alumni and make them feel valued and involved. It may also create a few networking opportunities.

We would like to have the new newsletter out by June. Ashley will send out an email as we get closer, asking for content.

Student Pulse

Congratulations FST Undergrad Students

A team of dedicated students have achieved a remarkable victory in the Regional College Bowl Competition. The team lead by Elijah Wald (team captain), showcased their extensive knowledge in food science and technology, beating out several teams to secure the championship.

The college bowl challenges students by asking them questions related to food science, food processing, food law, and general food trivia.

Students will now participate in the national competition in Chicago which will be held during the IFT Annual Conference held July 13-16.

Also, thank you to Dr. Chaves for mentoring these students. The success of these students is in part to your mentorship, guidance and leadership.

Congratulations again to Maya Tanikawa-Brown, Adam Lierz, Axl Rasmussen Janine Merkle and Mary Morran for your outstanding achievement and good luck in the national competition.



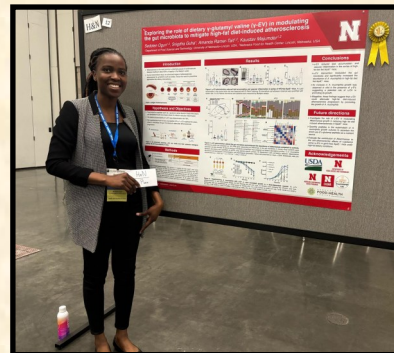
Student Pulse



Congratulations FST Students

Please help me congratulate Dr. Majumder's lab for their outstanding performance at the recent AOCS Meeting in Portland. Overall, his research group secured 7 awards during the meeting!

I also want to congratulate all the UNL students that attended the meeting. GBR! It is very fulfilling to see students being encouraged by their supervisors to participate in international conferences and putting themselves "out there" to share their research and experiences. It is great to win awards to be recognized, but also want to emphasize that most of the time selecting "winners" is very hard, and the important part is to "go out there" and show the world what you can do! Great job! We are extremely proud of each one of you!



Student Pulse



Congratulations

Congratulations to Car Reen Kok for being named the recipient Of the Global Prebiotics Association 2025 Your Researcher Award for Applied Research. This prestigious award recognized her outstanding paper, "**Identification of Carbohydrate Gene Clusters Obtained from In Vitro Fermentations as Predictive Biomarkers of Prebiotic Responses**," published in BMC Microbiology.

Car's research was a collaborative effort, with co-authors Devin Rose, Juan Cui from Computer Science, Lisa Whisenhunt from the Nebraska Food for Heather Center (NFHC) and Bob Hutkins. The paper was funded in part by the NFHC, highlighting the importance in interdisciplinary collaboration in advancing scientific knowledge.

Car Reen's academic journey began at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), where she earned her B.S. in Biochemistry. She then joined Dr. Hutkins' lab for her M.S. in food science and her Ph.D. in Complex Biosystems. Her dedication and hard work have led her to her current role as a staff scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Lab.

We are incredibly proud of Car's achievements and look forward to seeing her continued contributions to the field.

Student Pulse

Congratulations Graduates!!

Graduate Students

Rachana Police, MS (project), advised by Rossana Villa Rojas

Daniela Segura, MS (project), advised by Rossana Villa Rojas

Ellenor Sell, MS (thesis), advised by Philip Johnson

Yafan Yu, PhD (BIOC), advised by Kurt Piepenbrink

3+1 Program Graduates

Ruoyao Bi, Yueyan Dai, Yuyang Dai, Yanchu Du, Jingqi Feng, Yufei Fu, Yimeng Gao, Boyang Gao, Qiaoning Guo, Jiaqi He, Junyi He, Sirong Hong, Yixin Hu, Chunyan Hu, Hanyin Kou, Jinheng Lei, Jiaming Li, Yuyang Li, Tianyi Li, Ju Li, Yufei Liu, Xiaoyue Liu, Jiachang Liu, Qi Liu, Jinghao Liu, Lin Lou, Yuzhang Pan, Anpei Song, Jiayin Song, Wenquiao Su, Chenfengjia Wang, Zhaoting Wang, Chunze Wang, Junyi Wei, Qidi Wu, Ziqin Xu, Yaxian Yang, Ruolan Yang, Heyang Yuan, Guiyu Zhang, Zhen Zhang, Qinyu Zhang, Yishu Zhang, Qinwen Zheng, and Yingjie Zhou

Undergraduates

Mary Morran, Janine Merkle, Adam Lierz, and Maya Tanikawa-Brown



BUILDING BETTER TEAMS: HR INSIGHTS

According to UNL Policy, requests for Employment and Mortgage Verifications MUST be processed through UNL/HR. Requests from your department or from the business center HR Coordinator cannot be completed.

Please click on this link for instructions to make an employment or mortgage request:

<https://hr.unl.edu/current-employees/employment-and-mortgage-verifications/>



The Business Brief: Updates from the Business Center

WELCOME!

Please Welcome Ryan Baker to the NIC Business Center Team!

Ryan joins us from Pinnacle Bank, where he served as a Branch Manager for several years. He brings a wealth of financial experience that will be a great asset to our department.

In his role here, Ryan will be focusing on faculty account management, pre-award grant submission, and post-award grant management. His office is located in Room 241, so feel free to stop by and say hello.

We're excited to have Ryan on board and look forward to the expertise and energy he brings to our team.



Students Visit ADM Grain



Exciting News!

First-year students from the Practical Applications in Food Science course at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln recently had the chance to step beyond the classroom with an engaging visit to ADM Grain, hosted by Process Safety Engineer Erik Ohnoutka. Organized by course instructor Dr. Rossana Villa-Titov and accompanied by Department Head Dr. Silvana Martini, the visit offered students an inside look at how soybeans are processed into oil, lecithin, and other essential food ingredients. Erik shared valuable insights on safety practices in large-scale operations, enriching the students' understanding of both processing and industry standards. The experience sparked enthusiasm, curiosity, and deeper appreciation for the real-world applications of food science.

Celebrating Excellence

We were thrilled to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our faculty and students on Monday, May 5th at the East Campus Student Union. The dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence have earned them awards and scholarships, showcasing the high standards of our department. This year's awards banquet, "Food Around the Globe," added a delightful international flavor to the celebration.

Our faculty members continued to set the bar high in teaching and research. This year, several of our faculty members were recognized for the exceptional contributions. It was also announced that three members were promoted, demonstrating their dedication and achievements.

Our students have also excelled in various academic activities, reflecting their dedication and passion for learning. There were several awards and scholarships received to students who have shown exceptional academic performance. Their commitment to excellence and hard work sets a remarkable example for their peers.

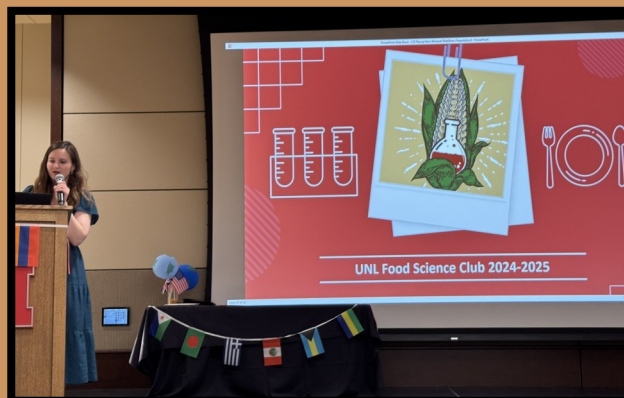
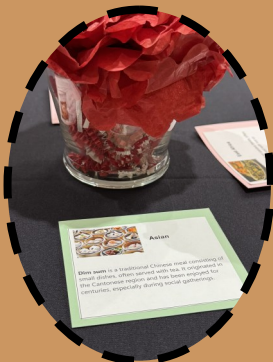
The "Food Around the Globe" theme added a unique and festive atmosphere to the banquet. The event not only honored the awards recipients but also fostered a sense of community and global appreciation.

We are incredibly proud of the accomplishments of our faculty and students. Their awards are a testament to the high standards of excellence that our department tries to uphold. Congratulations to all the award recipients? You achievements inspire us all to continue striving for greatness.



THE FACULTY FORUM: HIGHLIGHTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Celebrating Excellence



RECRUITING ROUNDUP: UPDATES AND INSIGHTS

UNO SYMPOSIUM

April is the peak of our recruiting! We attended multiple events with access to many students in both middle and high school who now know about food science as a career. Notable events were the UNO Pre Health Symposium where Amanda Raimer-Tait and I spoke with high school and college students about our Food for Health option and the state Science Olympiad competition. We also hosted the FCCLA baking competition for the 2nd year in a row, establishing a new tradition with that group.

May continues to be an exciting month as we host the final LPS Culinary II classes to tour and learn about food science. This month also brings a unique opportunity to help host the National Science Olympiad competition. We will have a table and an activity for the students to attend in between their competition times.

Reach out if you'd like to volunteer. It can be in any capacity from attending events, helping with preparations, or preparing food science activities for our prospective recruits!





1. Food Allergy Management Symposium (FAMS) 2025 – May 20-22, 2025 (Sydney, Australia)
2. American Society of Mass Spectrometry – June 1-5, 2025 (Baltimore, MD)
3. FARRP Food Proteomics Workshop - June 23-26, 2025 (Lincoln, NE)
4. International Association for Food Protection – July 25-30, 2025 (Cleveland, OH)
 - A. Demystifying Dry Cleaning: When, How and Why of Dry Cleaning & Sanitizing; Workshop, July 25-26, 8:30-5:00 each day
 - B. Risk Assessments for Precautionary Labeling Allergen Thresholds; Monday, July 28, 10:45-12:15
 - C. Decoding Food Allergen Methods: Why, When, and How to Implement Analysis; Roundtable; Monday, July 28, 1:30-3:00PM
 - D. Allergen Management in Hospitality Venues; Symposium, July 30, 8:30-10:00
5. AOAC International Annual Meeting – August 23-28, 2025 (San Diego, CA)
 - A. The Roles of Analytical Methods and Data in Food Allergen Risk Assessment

Thank you all for your contributions. This kind of national visibility reflects the excellence and dedication of our entire team. Well done!



*Department of Food Science
and Technology*