



GRIB Post-Conference Report

April 2022

The **Graduate Research in Interdisciplinary Biosciences (GRIB) Conference** is an annual research conference planned and executed by a collaborative team of graduate students from multiple life science graduate programs centered on the Cook/Douglass Campus. The conference originated with students from the Nutritional Sciences and Endocrinology & Animal Biosciences graduate programs and later incorporated the Food Science graduate program, leading to the Nutrition, Endocrinology, and Food Science (NEFS) Graduate Student Conference. The NEFS team produced many successful conferences, including its first ever virtual conference in Spring 2021, for which the Graduate Student Association (GSA) conferred the Programming/Event of the Year Award in recognition of the conference's outstanding efforts to enhance the student perspective, strengthen community bonds, and create an inclusive space. In the spirit of continual growth, NEFS welcomed the Kinesiology & Applied Physiology graduate program to the team at the end of the previous semester. The team decided to rebrand NEFS to the Graduate Research in Interdisciplinary Biosciences Conference as a more appropriate name to represent all the individuals involved in the planning committee, as well as the diverse topics covered during the conference. Overall, GRIB features the research of graduate students in these interdisciplinary fields and encourages all students, faculty, and staff from any STEM-oriented department to attend, present their research, and network with the rest of the Rutgers Community.

This year's GRIB Conference took place on Tuesday, April 12 in Traves Hall of the Douglass Student Center. Eighty students, faculty, and staff were in attendance, including thirteen poster session presenters. **Rutgers President Dr. Jonathan Holloway** opened the GRIB 2022 Conference by detailing his excitement regarding inclusion in this graduate student-run event. He noted that it illustrated the University's commitment to research and highlighted the importance of graduate work and collaboration. Flipping to a presentation slide filled with headshots of the GRIB Planning Committee members, President Holloway remarked on how this group of graduate students exemplified "diversity in every sense of the word."



Opening Remarks - President Holloway



Graduate Student Presentation - Eli Berger

Following President Holloway's opening remarks, **Dr. John Guers** of Rider University delivered the first research keynote presentation on the traditional and nontraditional therapeutic uses of exercise. **Dr. Traci McCarthy, DPT**, of the Kinesiology & Applied Physiology program, then described her research on the effects of exercise during pregnancy on sleep, low back pain, and fetal hemodynamics. Food Science Ph.D. Candidate **Ke Sui** presented her work on the potential of cannabidiol to alleviate estrogen deficiency-associated metabolic disorders, followed by a live poster session during the lunch break. In the common interest keynote presentation, **Dr.**

Rebecca Shansky of Northeastern University revealed the misconceptions fueling the historical use of male rodents as the default model organism in biomedical research and discussed best practices for designing experiments using both sexes. **Gregory (Eli) Berger**, Endocrinology & Animal Biosciences Ph.D. Candidate, then described his work in elucidating the role of orexin in binge eating, followed by Nutritional Sciences Ph.D. Candidate **Esther Mezhibovsky**, who presented her work on the use of grape polyphenols to reduce diet-induced weight gain via effects on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. Finally, **Dr. Alex Dainis**, Video Producer and Owner of Helicase Media, LLC, gave an insightful career-oriented keynote presentation on science communication as a career path and research aid.

The conference concluded by recognizing the winners of the poster competition, sponsored by the **New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health (IFNH)**. The GRIB team extends congratulations to Stephania Guzman (first place), Natasha Malonza (second place), and Emily Hanselman (third place) as winners of the graduate student poster competition, as well as Sarah Sywanycz (first place), Jakub Suchojad (second place), and Veronika Hajduczka (third place) as winners of the undergraduate poster competition. This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our long-standing industry sponsors **Research Diets** and **Campbell's**, as well as the **SEBS Dean's Office**, **IFNH**, **GSA**, **Douglass WiSE Program**, and the **Departments of Nutritional Sciences, Animal Sciences, and Food Science**. The GRIB team is incredibly grateful to the attendees, poster presenters, poster judges, and keynote speakers who made the GRIB 2022 Conference a success!



Poster Session



GRIB 2022 Planning Committee