A COLLECTION OF SENTIMENTS

From and For the Spring and Summer Classes of 2020

AUGUST 19, 2020
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Despite the unprecedented nature of the 2020 Spring and Summer semesters at Kansas State University and other organizations around the world, it was important to the K-State Food Science Institute to honor and celebrate the accomplishments of our most recent graduates. Milestones of this size are meant to be celebrated as best we know how.

Originally presented in a Zoom event format, the following pages are a compilation of materials shared by our graduates and undergraduates as well as comments made by FSI faculty and staff. We know these experiences are not quite like walking across a stage or sitting in a crowded arena, but we hope they will succeed in providing some of the warm and fuzzy feelings associated with the recognition of a job well done.

This series of celebratory opportunities was made possible by Dr. Jeanette Thurston, who provided her vision and leadership. Christine Rock co-led this effort and did everything she could to ensure the graduation celebration was superbly executed. We are also thankful for the resource-sharing of Nicole Marple, the creative consulting of April Molitor, and Food Science faculty and staff for providing celebratory messages to each of our graduates. Finally, thank you to everyone for participating and being open and welcoming to this new approach to the celebration of graduation.

Again, congrats 2020 grads. You did it!
ABOUT JOSH

Dr. Maher believes he could not have completed this degree without the support of friends, family, and the K-State Food Science community. In fact, Dr. Maher began a PhD in food science with very little food science experience to speak of. Scientific conferences, classrooms, and laboratories provided the necessary locations for a degree in food science but it was the people who fostered his curiosity and encouraged him to fulfill his potential.

Dr. Maher now plans to use the skills he learned and experiences he has shared during the last 3 years to tackle the complex public health issues of food-borne illness and antimicrobial resistance.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Dr. Maher appreciates his advisor, Dr. Sara Gragg, for investing in him as a researcher and as a friend. Her help and belief in him were essential to accomplishing this academic goal. Dr. Maher wishes to say a special thank you to his wife, Abby, and three beautiful children, Leah, James, and Grace, for their support and sacrifice during this challenging time in his career and for giving him the strength to do things which he couldn’t have done alone. He would also like to say a final thank you to all who have helped and mentored him through this journey.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

A faculty member has shared that Josh exemplifies tremendous dedication, independence, and hard work. Job well done! Thanks for all that you have done and contributed to K-State! Great perseverance! Wishing you all the best in your future!
ABOUT EILISH

Eilish has been working as a food technologist in desserts at Rich Products in Buffalo, NY for the past 5 years. She is excited to continue her career there.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Eilish would like to thank all of her professors and give a special thank you to her advisor, Dr. Nutsch. She would also like to thank her co-workers for their support and guidance, and say thank you to her husband, AJ, for listening to her talk about ice cream all day.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

As a note from her advisor reads: Congratulations on completing the Food Science online MS program, Eilish! In addition to your outstanding academic record, your self-discipline, determination, and attention to detail have been second to none. You should be tremendously proud of all the time and effort you've invested to achieve this goal. It has been such a pleasure working with you as your advisor, and I wish you all the best in the future. Congratulations again!
ABOUT KAYLA

Kayla began studying at Kansas State to change careers from dietetics to food science. During those three years, she studied after work, late at night, during holidays, on planes, and on vacation to get here, to graduation. Kayla was lucky enough to get a job before graduation and has been working as a product developer since March, 2020. Though learning her role has been difficult in the era of COVID, she has already had the chance to work on existing and new processes.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Kayla would like to say thank you to her tireless editors, especially her sister, Rachel, and husband, Adrian. Kayla would also like to thank her parents, Fred and Karen, for their support, including both emotional and financial. Finally, Kayla would like to say thank you to the Maurine Allison O’Bannon Memorial Scholarship fund and to her professors for sharing their knowledge.

A MESSAGE OF CONTRATULATIONS

In the words of a FSI faculty member: Congratulations on this great accomplishment! This is all due to your efforts, I wish you the best in your future!
ABOUT KRISTEN

As a full time employee at Hormel Foods, Kristen was initially nervous about concurrently pursuing a graduate degree after many years away from school. However, food science faculty and staff made her transition seamless and she immediately felt comfortable with her decision to further her education. Kristen really enjoyed being a part of FSI at K-State.

Kristen looks forward to applying what she has learned to her work in Research and Development at Hormel Foods.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Kristen would like to thank Drs. Boyle, Nutsch, Aramouni, and O'Quinn for contributing to her academic experience. She also extends gratitude to her family and friends for their love, especially her husband, Brent, and her best friend, Jen Everson, a fellow Wildcat. Kristen looks forward to continuing her relationship with K-State and the Food Science Institute as an alum.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

A faculty member would like to share the following: Congratulations Kristen on completing a thesis through the Food Science M.S. program. Your dedication to completing your degree while working full-time is commendable. Wishing you the best as you move forward with your career.
ABOUT ELLEN

Ellen worked at the food microbiology and safety lab under Dr. Valentina Trinetta studying biofilm formation of Listeria monocytogenes and the effect of sanitation strategies. She is planning to work in the food industry to ensure the safety of food products.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Ellen wants to thank her advisor, lab mates and friends for their help and support throughout her time at K-State.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

In a statement of congratulations, a faculty member has shared that Ellen is an outstanding student, and her curiosity and personality will be missed.
ABOUT CHRIS

Earning his Master of Science in Food Science (focusing on Sensory Science) while working full-time at the largest manufacturer of flexible packaging materials for food in North America was a challenging and fulfilling experience for Chris. The knowledge gained from his MS in Food Science from K-State complements his BS in Food Science/Microbiology from the Pennsylvania State University. Combined with six years of experience in food packaging/stability formulation engineering and two years in Regulatory Affairs, Chris understands how foods change over their shelf-life, how to influence these changes through product reformulations or package material changes, and ultimately measure how everything comes together to affect the end-consumer’s sensorial experience upon consumption.

With these new tools in his “toolbox,” Chris can’t wait to take the next step in his career and begin working for a major food developer/manufacturer.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Chris would like to say thank you to all his family, friends and faculty (especially Dr. Delores and Edgar Chambers!!!) who have helped him reach this great accomplishment! GO STATE!

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

A faculty member has shared that Chris Trave did an outstanding job on his presentation and his defense. He had a deep understanding of the use of Sensory Analysis in Food Product Development and Quality Control.
ABOUT LOGAN
While completing his Master’s program, Logan worked full time at Givaudan Flavors as a Food Technologist. He attended additional workshops at the American Institute of Baking (Manhattan, KS) and Culinary Institute of America (San Antonio, TX). Logan plans to continue his career at Givaudan Flavors with the ultimate goal of becoming a Food Scientist.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE
Chris would like to thank his friends, family, and coworkers who have always supported him and helped him reach his goals.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS
A faculty member would like to share the following: Congratulations on completing the Food Science online MS program, Logan! We are delighted and proud to count you among our alumni--you’ve demonstrated tremendous dedication in balancing both professional and academic obligations. I have enjoyed serving as your advisor and am so pleased to celebrate this accomplishment with you. Again, congratulations and best wishes!
ABOUT LAILA

Laila says she had a wonderful time expanding her interests in the world of the Food Science Institute. The research-focused mission of FSI set her up for her current job. Without gaining an appreciation for scientific research and development and related opportunities through FSI, she believes she would not be where she is today.

Currently, Laila is an account data analyst for a biotech/biodefense company called Synexis. Her responsibilities include monitoring the improvement and mitigation of bioburdens within the environments of her clients’ facilities.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

A professor shared this message: Your desire to explore many avenues of food science is to be commended. Congratulations and may you continue your adventures in life!
ABOUT EMMA

Throughout her time at K-State, Emma says she met some great people and had many amazing opportunities. Her favorite experience with Food Science at K-State was her time studying abroad in Italy in 2019! Now that she has completed her degree, she will begin work as a Quality Assurance Technician at Brill.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Emma would like to thank everyone who helped make the last 4 years memorable for her.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

A faculty member expressed the following: Congratulations! Your warm and pleasant personality will be missed! All the best.
ABOUT LINDSEY

As she reflects on her time at K-State, Lindsey says that she experienced many wonderful memories and opportunities through the Food Science Institute. She was presented with new information and challenges that sparked her curiosity and ultimately inspired her to want to dive into the world of Research and Development. As a student, Lindsey had the opportunity to hold two internships in the food industry. She assisted in meal kit development with Happy Food Co. in the summer of her Junior year and was a Research and Development Intern with Conagra Brands in the summer leading into her Senior year.

Lindsey is excited to announce that she has accepted a full time job with Conagra Brands and is working on product development for frozen meals in Omaha, NE.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Lindsey would like to thank all of the amazing FSI faculty and staff for preparing her and her classmates to succeed at K-State and beyond through the pride and love they showed for both teaching and their students. Without the faculty and staff, she believes she and her classmates would not be nearly where they are today!

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

A faculty member would like to share this message: Congratulations! You are an outstanding graduate who will be an excellent representative of the K-State Food Science program. Much success in your future endeavors.
ABOUT EVAN

While at K-State, Evan worked part time for a year at Decibel Labs, a food microbiology lab, and in Dr. Aramouni’s lab during his final semester on campus. Evan is currently located in New Jersey, where he works at a creamery producing artisan dairy products. Evan plans on staying in the Northeast, and is also interested in the possibility of working in a food lab. One fond memory with the Food Science Institute was the Taste of Peru event hosted by Food Science Club and FSI’s former Program Assistant, Elsa. Evan really enjoyed learning about, cooking, and tasting the delicious foods!

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Evan would like to thank his family for all of their love and support, his advisor Dr. Nutsch for getting him through the years, and Dr. Aramouni for allowing him to learn and work in his lab.

MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATIONS

From a faculty member: Congratulations! Your ability to ask questions and learn will take you far. Good luck!

And another: Congratulations, Evan--you should be so proud of your hard work and dedication! I have enjoyed working with you and wish you all the best in your new position!
ABOUT CASSIDY

During her time at K-State, Cassidy had two internships. The first was with Smithfield Foods Inc. as a Quality Assurance and Food Safety Intern. The was second with K-State Research and Extension.

For the time being, Cassidy is working as a 4-H Program Assistant for the Southwind Extension in Yates Center, Kansas.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Cassidy would like to thank her family, especially her mother, and close friends for all of their support throughout her four years of college. Cassidy says she wouldn’t have been able to do it without their love and support.

A MESSAGE OF CONTRATULATIONS

A note from her advisor reads as follows: Congratulations, Cassidy! I have so enjoyed serving as your advisor these past four years—it has been a privilege to work with you. I’m so proud of your hard work and all you have accomplished, and I know there are great things in store for your future. I wish you all the best!
ABOUT BRITTANY

While at K-State, Brittany was employed in Call Hall’s Dairy Bar and in Dr. Phebus’s lab. Now graduated, Brittany has begun working as a research and development technician for Hostess Brands in Lenexa.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Brittany would like to thank all of the food science faculty and staff and especially her advisor, Dr. Nutsch, for talking her into joining the food science family a few years ago! She says the Kansas State Food Science Institute will always have her heart!

MESSAGES OF CONTRATULATIONS

In a note of support, one would like to share the following: Congratulations! I will miss your laugh and smile and fun talks in the Dairy Bar.

And another: Congratulations, Brittany--I know the road was not always easy, but you persevered and finished strong! So proud of all your hard work and dedication. All the best to you in the future!
ABOUT HANNAH

During her time at K-State, Hannah had an internship with Tyson where she worked as a Food Safety and Quality Assurance Intern in their Dakota City, NE location. Later, Hannah assisted Dr. Yucel with a research project that compared the effectiveness of dish sanitizers. Hannah also worked for Dr. Getty for 2 years as a teacher’s assistant for her Fundamentals of Food Processing Class. An additional year was spent working for Dr. Trinetta in her Food Micro lab.

Hannah recently moved to Harrisonburg, VA where she is a Food Safety, Quality, and Regulatory Associate for Cargill. Hannah is so far enjoying her work in their turkey processing plant. One of Hannah’s favorite memories with food science was the closeness she felt toward her peers and professors. She loved the fact that it is a smaller major, because everyone was able to get to know each other really well and make meaningful connections.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Hannah really wants to say thank you to her parents who have pushed her to go after what she wants to do in life. They have been so supportive and she can’t thank them enough for everything they have done to get her to where she is today.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

One of Hannah’s professors shared this message: Congratulations! Your contributions to the FDSCI program as a TA were very much appreciated! May you continue to uphold high standards for all!
ABOUT MACI

While a K-State student, Maci completed 4 internships: with Tippin’s Gourmet Pies in Kansas City, Kansas as a food safety intern, with Grandma Hoerner’s in Alma, Kansas as a research and development intern, and with the Alma Creamery in Alma, Kansas as a food safety intern/consultant. Maci has made many memories at Call Hall over the years, as she worked in the building in various capacities throughout her career at K-State. Maci worked in the Dairy Bar and Dairy Plant, for Dr. Aramouni’s Kansas Value Added Foods Lab, and in Dr. Trinetta’s lab. Lastly, Maci was a student recruiter for the Food Science Institute.

All things considered, Maci says she never tired of Call Hall, even after spending most of her college career either attending class or working in that building. Despite the challenges of COVID, on March 28, Maci was able to marry her now husband and the two reside in Spring Hill, KS. Maci is currently working full-time at Spicin Foods in Kansas City, KS as a Food Safety Specialist. She says she is absolutely loving married life and being in the working world!

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Maci would like to thank God, her husband, her family, and her friends for never failing to encourage her throughout the past 4 years. Maci would also like to thank the faculty at the Food Science Institute for heavily investing in her throughout her time as a food science student. Because of the faculty and staff, Maci feels prepared for the working world and the start of her long career as a food scientist. Maci says she will miss popping her head into their offices to say hi on her way to class and work, and hopes to visit often and stay in touch. Every Man a Wildcat, always!

A MESSAGE OF CONTRATULATIONS

The following statement was shared about Maci: Maci has been such a wonderful help to the FDSCI program over the years. While we will miss Maci’s kind demeanor and professionalism in the FSI front office, we know that Maci will continue to excel in whatever she decides to do. Congratulations Maci!!
ABOUT SEAN
Sean has 15 years-experience in the Food Safety and Quality industry. He has worked as an hourly production worker, a quality manager, Director of Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Food Safety and Quality Auditor, and as a Consultant for the Food Safety and Quality Industry while earning his degree. His future in this industry will be in the role of Auditor/Consultant, as he is starting his own company and his passion is to help others in their journey to making safe, wholesome food.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE
Sean would like to thank his parents for instilling a high degree of ethical and moral standards and the stubbornness to keep to them. He wants to thank his wife (Sarah) for pushing him to finish his degree even after a 14 hour day at work dealing with the stresses of life and picking up his slack in the day-to-day. He believes that he wouldn’t be here without her. Sean would also like to thank his kids for giving him the drive to see this degree through. Finally, he would like to thank his academic advisor, Deanna Retzlaff, for making this journey as easy as possible and helping him along the way. He says he wasn’t always the easiest student.

A MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS
A message of congratulations reads as follows: Congratulations on completing your degree. I know it has been a long journey while also working full-time. Best wishes!
The following individuals have also completed their Master of Science-Food Science. The corresponding messages were written by FSI faculty and staff on their behalf.

**STAPHANIE BROOKS**

Congratulations! You persevered and finished your degree. All the best.

**NICHOLAS FORSHEE**

Congratulations on your graduation from the Food Science online MS program, Nick! I have been so impressed by the hard work and dedication you've invested on the road to this accomplishment. It was a pleasure serving as your advisor and I look forward to hearing about all the great things that come your way in the future. Congratulations again and best wishes!

**LINDSAY JEPERSON**

Great job. Ms. Jespersen has been a dedicated and outstanding student throughout her Online MS training with a lively personality.

**HANNAH KRIEG**

A determined and diligent student, Hannah did a wonderful job connecting all she learned during on-line classes in her final presentation.

**SEERA KURUVILA**

Sera is a kind, hardworking, and dedicated student. She was a committed and passionate MS student. Great job and best wishes!
ADDITIONAL GRADUATES
Masters of Science-Food Science

The following individuals have also completed their Master of Science-Food Science. The corresponding messages were written by FSI faculty and staff on their behalf.

ELIZABETH SAINDON
Congratulations, Liz, for completing the Food Science online MS program! I know the path was not easy, but all your hard work and dedication has now paid off--what an accomplishment! I have so enjoyed working with you and wish you all the best in your new position and the next phase of your career. Congratulations again and best wishes!

PRIYAMVADA THORAKKATTU
We will miss your positive attitude and wonderful smile Priya. Your future is as bright as your smile! May you continue to show genuine care for all.
The following undergraduates have also completed their Bachelor of Science-Food Science, and messages of congratulations have been written for each of them by faculty and staff.

**TORY BACH**
*Congratulations! May you continue to be open and explore the world of food science.*

**RYAN BAKER**
*Congratulations Ryan on your graduation. Your passion for food science and nutrition will make an impact on improving human lives.*

**ANITA CAVENAND**
*I know the degree completion took longer than you had hoped due to work obligations, but I am proud of your accomplishment!*

**MEGAN CEPLLO**
*You did it! Congratulations on pushing through the challenges and completing your degree!*

**AMANDA COATNEY**
*Congratulations! May you find ways to use your food science degree to help others in your new field of study! All the best.*

*Congratulations, Amanda! I’m so proud of you and have very much enjoyed serving as your advisor these past four years. Wishing you all the best in nursing school!*
The following undergraduates have also completed their Bachelor of Science-Food Science, and messages of congratulations have been written for each of them by faculty and staff.

**CYDNEY COX**

Great job Cydney! We are so proud of your accomplishment and wish you all the best!

**SIMONE FASSINA**

Simone is bright and passionate about food science! Enjoyed visiting about career opportunities in the food industry with you! Congratulations on all of your achievements at K-State! Your inquisitive attitude and perseverance will get you far. Good luck to you!

**BRANDIE HODGES**

Congratulations on completing your degree! I know you had some challenging semesters with other obligations, but you pushed through and got the job done!

**JENNIFER JONES**

Congratulations! You are to be commended for your hard work! All the best as you start your food science career.

**KORRINE KELLER**

Enjoy your sense of accomplishment in a completing your degree! We wish you the best in your future endeavors.
The following undergraduates have also completed their Bachelor of Science-Food Science, and messages of congratulations have been written for each of them by faculty and staff.

**MADYSON LAMB**

Madyson is adventurous and curious about food science and different foods... I enjoyed taking you to my home-country.

**MEGAN WEATHERS**

Congratulations! You did it! Your positive outlook and warm smile will be missed! All the best as you start new adventures.

**WANGYI WEI**

Congratulations! Your ability to share a laugh and smile will be missed!

Congratulations on all your hard work, Wangyi! I have so enjoyed serving as your advisor and wish you all the best in the future!

**HEQING XU**

Congratulations! You did it! Believe in yourself and you will go far. Good luck on your new adventure in another country!