

Media Relations

December 3, 2015

Nutrition Innovator Miriam Nelson Joins UNH Sustainability Institute



Miriam Nelson, a leading researcher and author on nutrition and physical activity, will become the deputy chief sustainability officer and director of the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire. Courtesy photo.

DURHAM, N.H. – Miriam Nelson, a leading researcher and author on nutrition and physical activity, will become the deputy chief sustainability officer and director of the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire. Nelson, who is associate dean of Tufts University's Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service and professor of nutrition at its Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, will join UNH in March 2016.

"Mim Nelson comes to us at a time when the challenges and opportunities of sustainability continue to grow at an unprecedented pace and all good efforts, including those at UNH, must be redoubled," says Tom Kelly, UNH chief sustainability officer and founding director of the [Sustainability Institute](#). "Not only does her unique background and record of accomplishment align perfectly with our growing body of work on climate change and food

systems, but her grasp of sustainability as a process reaching from the local to the global and that draws equally from the sciences, humanities and community knowledge make her ideal for our unique brand of sustainability."

Kelly, who will become executive director of the Sustainability Institute, highlights Nelson's national leadership on the 2010 and 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committees, which shone a national spotlight on the connection between diet and sustainability, as particularly relevant to her new role at UNH. "Add to that her success as a scientist building a multi-million dollar research initiative and an accomplished author and fundraiser and you begin to see why we're so excited for her to join us in the next phase of our work," he adds.

“I couldn’t be more excited to be joining UNH as the director of the Sustainability Institute. I am thrilled about this opportunity, as UNH is a powerhouse in the area of climate change, sustainability and food systems,” says Nelson. “Combining research, education and practice across the university to tackle global issues that have both local and world relevance is what attracted me to the position. With two decades of leadership in this area, UNH is the right place for me, right now.”

On the Tufts faculty since 1990, Nelson is the founding director of the John Hancock Research Center on Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention. She has published extensive scholarly work on food policy, public health and civic engagement. In addition, Nelson is the author of 10 books, including the New York Times bestselling “Strong Women Stay Young” and eight others in the “Strong Women” series. Her research has been the foundation of the [StrongWomen Program](#), a community-based public health program for women implemented in more than 35 states.

In addition to her work on dietary guidelines for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, her public policy contributions include serving as vice chair of the Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee (2008) and as a member of the Science Board of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition (2011-14, chair 2013).

“UNH is fortunate to have Mim Nelson as part of our team,” says Jan Nisbet, senior vice provost for research. “She is a well-known scholar and her deep commitment to sustainability, public health and community engagement will help advance UNH’s strategic plan. ”

UNH, home to the nation's first endowed office of sustainability in higher education, embraces sustainability as a core value that shapes its culture and informs its behavior. UNH has received awards and recognition for its sustainability initiatives, which include innovative academic programs and research in fields like EcoGastronomy and marine science, the largest transit system in the state of New Hampshire (run mainly on alternative fuels), EPA Energy Star buildings, a revolving energy efficiency fund and the landmark EcoLine landfill gas-to-energy project. Founded in 1997, the Sustainability Institute is recognized nationally as a leading authority on sustainability within higher education, working closely with educators, students, policymakers and researchers at UNH and beyond to bring learning in sustainability to life.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 13,000 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students across three campuses.

Photograph available to download: http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2015/12/images/img-0Nelson_headshot_2_2015.jpg

Caption: Miriam Nelson, a leading researcher and author on nutrition and physical activity, will become the deputy chief sustainability officer and director of the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire. Courtesy photo

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