



By Jenny Hellwig  
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Tufts University has named a new dean at its graduate school of nutrition, who is aiming to expand the school's impact in addressing food and nutrition issues.

On July 1, Christina Economos will be appointed as the permanent head the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. She currently serves as interim dean.

As the author of more than 200 scientific publications, Economos is nationally recognized for her research on community-based obesity prevention using a systems approach. She received her Ph.D. from the Friedman School in 1996 and has been a Tufts professor since 2000.

Economos said that she has had the opportunity to work towards her vision of the Friedman School while serving in various administrative roles.

"Now, it's really my responsibility to execute the entire vision," Economos said.

As the only graduate school of nutrition in the country, the Friedman School is positioned to make change in society through producing research that will influence policy decision making, Economos said. She pointed out that the Friedman School is also unique because of its interdisciplinary approach.

"Our faculty come from different backgrounds and approach problems with different perspectives, scientific approaches, and tools," Economos said. "That helps us to solve and work on very large problems like climate change, hunger and sustainability, and chronic disease."

Furthermore, Economos said that one of her long-term goals is to make the Friedman School's educational programming more accessible.

"Boston is an expensive area to live in, and we want to make sure that the excellent education that we offer is more accessible to students from different areas and from different backgrounds," Economos said.

Economos' desire to make change doesn't end at the university level: she is also a co-founder and director of ChildObesity180, which focuses on addressing the childhood obesity epidemic.

According to the organization's website, its work has impacted more than 13 million children since its inception.

Economos' appointment will come at the same time as Dariush Mozaffarian, former dean of the Friedman School, takes on a leadership role with the new Food is Medicine initiative. Food is Medicine works with other universities and partners to highlight the impact of nutritious food on health through a variety of programs.

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