



Chicago Section
Institute of Food Technologists



the First Section

Focus on IFT Scholarship Award Winner: Aaron Uesugi



Current company/ job title: *Kraft Foods/ Sr. Scientist*

School attended/ graduation year/ degree(s) received: *I completed my B.S. in Food Science (food chemistry emphasis) and a minor in Environmental Toxicology at UC Davis. I enjoyed UC Davis so much that I stayed for a M.S. in Food Science as well.*

My master's degree focused on the growth and survival of Salmonella in almond kernels, shells, and hulls. Following my M.S., I left the sunshine and mild winters of California to pursue a Ph.D. in Food Science (minors in Food Microbiology and Applied Economics and Management) at Cornell University. My research focused on the use of pulsed light to decontaminated food and food contact surfaces.

- *University of California, Davis/ 2000 / B.S. Food Science*
- *University of California, Davis/ 2004 / M.S. Food Science*
- *Cornell University/ 2010 / Ph.D. Food Science*

Which IFT scholarship did you receive?

As an undergraduate and a graduate student I was fortunate to receive both national IFT and Sectional IFT scholarships including:

- *IFT Junior/Senior Scholarship*
- *IFT New York Section Graduate Fellowship*
- *Western New York IFT Student Scholarship*
- *IFT Proctor and Gamble Graduate Scholarship*

When did you receive the scholarships?

I was fortunate to receive both national IFT and sectional IFT scholarships during both my time as an undergraduate and a graduate student.

What has receiving this scholarship meant to you? How did it impact your research at school, and/or your career?

It was a great honor to be awarded scholarships from both IFT and the IFT sections, especially considering how strong the caliber of food science students are across all levels of academics. The scholarships are very helpful in relieving some of the financial stresses of student life.

Additionally, I was able to use some of the funds to support trips to IFT/IFTSA events including annual meetings, IFTSA area meetings, and IFT section events. By attending the IFT events I was provided an incredible opportunity to interact and socialize beyond my campus. Meeting new people, both students



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and professionals, provided an opportunity to learn about the food industry beyond the classroom and to build my network. It may seem like it is not worth the effort to network and meeting other students from different parts of the country or the world but the world of food science is small and you may end up sitting next to them at your first day of work and they will be your peers for your entire career. Plus we are nice people!

Did winning the scholarship impact your involvement in IFT? If so, how are you involved in IFT now?

Being involved in IFT is a reward in itself and being recognized with a scholarship was a wonderful bonus. Winning an IFT scholarship inspired me even more to give back to the organization so the next generation would have the same opportunities that I had. I was able to hold leadership positions with in the Food Science Clubs at both UC Davis and Cornell. In addition, I served as the North Atlantic Area Representative and was involved at a national with IFTSA.

I currently am on the scholarship committee for the CSIFT and was a College Bowl judge for the 2013 Midwest area meeting. I also maintain my connection to the first section I joined, Northern California, and attend meetings when possible.

What is your favorite IFT event and why?

My favorite IFT event(s) are the student award nights. I get very excited to see all the effort being recognized, whether it is for academic excellence, creative product development, or outstanding leadership. It really shows that IFT's future is very bright.