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04/06/2023

Nutrition, Dietetics & Food Sciences

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By Kayla Geddes | April 6, 2023



Tell us about you and what brought you to USU?

I am Abiodun Atoloye, an Assistant Professor at NDFS with a focus on the Nutrition Science arm of the department programs. I am a USU Aggie myself because I completed my PhD in Nutrition Science about 3 years ago from the same department. I am happy to be back at USU after a 3-year postdoctoral training on the East Coast, precisely at the University of Connecticut.

How did you end up in the field of nutrition?

I discovered my passion for nutrition-related issues during my undergraduate program in Food Science in Nigeria. The spark came in when I first took a course on nutrition in my third year, and it became a real thing when I was working on my thesis. I chose a thesis topic on developing complementary foods for infants using local nutritious food resources. But, this topic did not bring me quite close to the types of research approach or experience that I loved to have. I meant research experience that would bring me close and in touch with people and the community. I decide to go for an advanced degree (MSc) that would help me gain more knowledge in nutrition and achieve my target research experience. For my Master's thesis, I had a rewarding experience conducting an applied research in some communities in Nigeria which got funded by the

American Association of Geographers. I have been stuck with community nutrition ever since, and I love it.

Tell us about your current research?

My research broadly focuses on addressing inequities in food access and community food systems. I got 4 ongoing research; 2 US-based and 2 internationally-funded research. One of my US-based research seeks to understand how people access and use their community food resources and create resources to help them navigate their community food resources better. The other research seeks to improve refugees' and immigrants' experience in the WIC program through cultural considerations and the use of extension resources. My international research seeks to i) expose youths to and expand their interest in agricultural innovation and agribusiness through school gardening. We will also assess the impact of school gardening nutrition education on the nutrition and health outcomes of youths. ii) understand facilitators and barriers to reducing the prevalence of foodborne illness and its associated nutritional outcomes among households with young children from the perspectives of the children, their mothers and other community stakeholders.

What classes are you teaching?

I am teaching NDFS 6550, Public Health Policy and Advocacy this semester. Also, I will be developing a new course on Introduction to Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Fall.

What advice do you have for students pursuing a career in nutrition?

Have a strong grip on your goals and dreams and never lose sight of them. Please, note that opportunities may come in shades that seem not to be directly related to those dreams and goals. But be encouraged to be creative with those opportunities that come your way and learn to adapt them in ways that would help you make your dreams come true.

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