

## IFSH Seminar Series

Thursday, November 6, 2014

1:00PM – 2:00 PM

Room 100, Moffett Campus

### Elizabeth M. Grasso, Ph.D.

Research Assistant Professor  
Institute for Food Safety and Health  
Department of Food Science and Nutrition  
Illinois Institute of Technology

## “Educational Philosophy, Recent Research, and Future Research Visions”

### Biosketch

Dr. Elizabeth Grasso is a Research Assistant Professor in Food Science and Nutrition at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). She received her B.S. degree from The Pennsylvania State University and her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from The Ohio State University. In 2010, Dr. Grasso joined the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at the Institute for Food Safety and Health (IFSH) as part of the FDA Commissioner’s Fellowship Program. Her research focused on the survival of *Salmonella* in nut butter products and sanitation of pilot-scale nut butter processing equipment. In 2012, she joined IIT/IFSH to continue working in the low moisture food safety field. Her research interests include: characterizing the thermal resistance of pathogens in low moisture environments, investigating inoculation procedures for low moisture foods, and studying the survival of pathogens during storage and processing. She is the IIT leader on the newly formed IFSH Low Moisture Research Consortium (part of the IFSH Low Moisture Foods Safety Taskforce) and the Chair of the International Association for Food Protection’s Low Water Activity Foods Professional Development Group.

### Abstract

My overall vision is to continue to apply my knowledge and interest in the field of food microbiology and safety to help advance the future of food science through education and research. I will engage students, encourage their interests, advance knowledge, and elevate critical thinking skills through coursework and independent research projects. My recent research interests include; evaluating the efficacy of nonaqueous-based cleaning and sanitation for peanut butter contact surfaces, investigating the thermal resistance of pathogens in low water activity environments, and evaluating the inoculation procedures for low water activity foods. I will continue pursuing grant opportunities to help support my future research endeavors. Current and future research interests include; investigating legacy processing conditions for the inactivation of pathogens in low water activity food matrices and evaluating the risks associated with the production of various low water activity foods.