

**RITA STRAKOVSKY**  
East Lansing, Michigan  
*Outstanding Young Alumni Award 2021*

Dr. Rita Strakovsky is an assistant professor of Human Nutrition at Michigan State University (MSU) in East Lansing, Michigan. Because of the strong collaborations she established while a student, she is also an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Comparative Biosciences at the University of Illinois.

Strakovsky received her bachelor of science degree in molecular and cellular biology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 2005, and then completed her doctoral training with Dr. Yuan-Xiang Pan in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition in 2011. During her Ph.D. training, she also completed the coursework and clinical internship needed to obtain her Registered Dietitian credentials. Strakovsky was awarded a National Institutes of Health (NIH) T32 postdoctoral fellowship in reproductive and developmental toxicology and remained on campus to broaden her expertise in various environmental exposures that could negatively impact maternal and child health. In 2015, she was awarded the prestigious NIH K99/R00 Pathway to Independence award, which funded two additional years of her postdoctoral training and three years of her faculty appointment. In 2017, she accepted her current position at MSU, and has since obtained several large federal grants (including a recent R01), published numerous high-quality manuscripts, been a caring mentor to her trainees, and contributed her time generously to the service of the scientific community.

Strakovsky has a long history of prioritizing student success and mentoring. As an undergraduate student, she was the tutoring director of a large campus registered student organization. As a graduate student, she was on the List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent each semester she was a teaching assistant and has continued to receive excellent student feedback in her position at MSU. She currently serves on the undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees in her department. Strakovsky also serves on the departmental graduate affairs committee and was recently elected to serve in this role at the college level. She was also recently accepted as a faculty trainer on the NIH T32 training grant in reproductive and developmental sciences at MSU. She has also been the chair of the seminar and education committee for this training program, which provides research, ethics, and career development training for graduate students and postdocs in the program.

