ENDOWMENT PURPOSE
The Mars, Inc. Endowed Chair was established in 2005 by Mars to give special recognition to the chairholder and to provide supplemental financial support for teaching, research or outreach. The Mars, Inc. Endowed Chairholder focuses on research and information dissemination in the area of developmental nutrition, specifically the influence of diet on embryonic and fetal development.

RESEARCH
Funds available from The Mars, Inc. Endowed Chair in Developmental Nutrition have facilitated our research efforts in the area of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), a leading cause of preventable mental retardation in developing as well as in developed countries. In an ongoing intervention trial we are testing the hypothesis that the provision of micronutrient supplements to women during pregnancy can reduce the occurrence, and severity of FASD in high populations. Funding available from the endowment is also allowing us to better characterize the nutritional status of the children with FASD. It is anticipated that information obtained from the above work will lead to new approaches regarding the prevention of this common birth defect, and the treatment of children who have the syndrome.

TEACHING
With respect to the area of developmental nutrition, during the past year I taught undergraduate (Nutrition 114) and graduate (Nutrition 252) courses. In both classes, experimental approaches to the study of the causes of birth defects and their prevention were illustrated in part by using examples drawn from recent FASD literature, as well as our own going field work.

OUTREACH
During the past year, funds available from the endowment furthered the research projects of three of my graduate students (two Masters and one PhD); all of whom are involved in the above FASD project. The funds from the endowment were invaluable as they allowed us to investigate questions that were not covered by the initial extramural grant that we obtained from the NIH for this project.
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES
It is envisioned that funds from the endowment during the upcoming year will be used to continue our group's research, teaching and outreach efforts in the area of developmental nutrition, with an emphasis on the prevention and treatment of FASD.

SPECIAL ENDOWMENT USE
Activities that were directly supported from the fund during the past include graduate student support, graduate student travel to professional meetings, and the presentation of seminars and workshops in the area of developmental nutrition.