On April 6, 2021, WALSAA celebrated 25 years of Outstanding Sophomore Awards during a virtual awards ceremony. Highlights included updates from College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) Dean and Director Kate VandenBosch and Farm and Industry Short Course (FISC) Director Jennifer Blazek, special recognition of 2021 award recipients and a look back to previous recipients.

Chris and Courtney Booth of Plymouth, Wisconsin were both recipients of WALSAA’s Outstanding Sophomore Award. Chris is a veterinarian/partner at Dairy Doctors Veterinary Service and together, Chris and Courtney founded Booth Leadership, LLC where they share their passions for leadership and training.

We asked how WALSAA had an impact on their lives and what advice they would offer current students. Chris shared, “It was an honor to be recognized for my involvement early on in my college career. If I were a college sophomore again, I would seek out and explore many opportunities and experiences. Don’t be afraid to try something new!” Courtney said, “I was very honored to be awarded for getting involved and personally excelling in areas of my college experience. My favorite moments consisted of all the terrific relationships I was building with fellow agriculture enthusiasts and colleagues. I would encourage others to step into a higher level of leadership by growing their character, skills and servant heart so as opportunities arise they will know where to give full energy and commitment.”

Read more about this year’s Outstanding Sophomore Award scholarship recipients in this issue and watch for more look backs in future issues.

**New Lifetime Members**
- Erica Ballmer ’16
- Haley Kragness ’20
- Jennifer Blazek ’20
- Douglas Reinemann ’80 & ’82
- Ryan Gehin ’23
- Sakar Gupta ’23
- Lauren Lansing ’23
- Kalina Larsen ’23
- Lydia Larsen ’23
- Tanner Oyen ’23
- Olivia Spaight ’23
- McKenzie Trinko ’23
- Olivia Van Hammond ’23
- Alexis Wery ’23

**In Memoriam**
Deane Thomas, FISC ’55
As we prepare cautiously (but hopefully) to return to some semblance of normalcy post pandemic, WALSAA has done our best to use new and creative ways to keep the Badger community connected by providing virtual events, resources, alumni stories, and communications during these trying times.

It is that creativity that allowed us to complete the process of awarding ten Outstanding Sophomore scholarships and three Farm and Industry Short Course scholarships this spring culminating in a virtual celebration on April 9. Having been on the interview team for the awards for the past three years I have observed certain traits common to all applicants. They are resilient, resourceful, extremely intelligent, intentional, reliable, and compassionate in that they care deeply about what they do and the quality of relationships that they foster.

**A summary of the majors representing the 52 applicants for the Outstanding Scholarship Awards is as follows:**

- Agriculture and Applied Economics 1
- Agronomy 1
- Animal Science 6
- Biochemistry 3
- Biological Systems Engineering 2
- Biology 10
- Dairy Science 4
- Evolutionary Biology 1
- Genetics 1
- Genetics and Genomics 5
- Global Health 7
- Life Science Communication 3
- Microbiology 2
- Nutritional Science 4
- Wildlife Ecology 2

*Compiled by David Cooper, WALSAA Scholarship Committee Chair*

Since these are some of the brightest and best young minds attending CALS we thought we would take advantage of the opportunity to interview them by asking them, “What has made your CALS student experience unique and why should others consider the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at UW-Madison?” This effort was initiated by WALSAA Board Member, Kay Maas, who did a wonderful job in gathering the responses:

- Smaller size college and interdisciplinary nature
- World-class faculty
  - Supportive/want students to succeed
- CALS offers “...activities that encourage personal growth, professional development, and academic success.” Olivia Spaignt
  - An abundance of different organizations
  - Ease of making connections
- Students can personalize their college experience
  - One student is on track to graduate early due to the level of coordination and organization.
- CALS experience involves the integration of STEM and humanities
- “…the College of Agricultural and Life Science at UW Madison is, in my opinion, the epitome of the Wisconsin Idea. Both students and staff aim to positively influence people’s lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom.” Marina C. Navarro
- The ability to do research
  - 21/26 or 81% of the interviewees and 100% of the award winners were involved in undergraduate research.
  - Freshman seminar served to introduce students to research mentors.
  - Undergraduate research opportunities:
    - Honors in Research Program
    - Undergraduate Research Scholars program
- CALS QuickStart program.
  - 8/26 or 31% of the 26 interviewees for the OSA specifically mentioned QuickStart in their essay.
  - 40% of the award recipients were in QuickStart.

One common theme among the interviewees was the desire for mentoring/mentorship/job shadowing opportunities where they can gain experience and career guidance. Webster’s dictionary definition of a mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor. I define it as someone you can tell “the good, the bad and the ugly” to and who expects you to do the same for them in return. The payoff? A win for everyone involved when mentees and mentors are able to form a relationship based on trust and honest dialogue.

*Continued on page 3.*
Thank You for Making the ‘Day of the Badger’ a Success

On April 6-7, we held the second “Day of the Badger,” a follow-up to UW’s successful inaugural effort in April 2019. Over the course of 1848 minutes, more than 100 donors made gifts to CALS, and more than $25,000 was raised, putting CALS in 11th place on the leaderboard of campus units.

Many CALS alumni and programs played a key role in this achievement, including WALSAA. To WALSAA’s leaders, you have my deepest thanks for your efforts to spread the word about Day of the Badger. And to WALSAA members who posted, shared, contributed, or participated in other ways, you have my sincere gratitude as well.

The funds raised will go towards scholarships for participants in CALS QuickStart, a program designed to help incoming first-year students in any CALS major get a summer start on coursework, reduce their time to graduation, and join a cohort of other students. It’s hard for me to believe that some of the first participants in QuickStart are already graduating! And you can “meet” some of these students.

We’ve posted short Q&A’s with four recent QuickStart graduates on the CALS website:

- [go.wisc.edu/emily-hoffins](https://go.wisc.edu/emily-hoffins)
- [go.wisc.edu/lizzy-hucker](https://go.wisc.edu/lizzy-hucker)
- [go.wisc.edu/taylor-meyer](https://go.wisc.edu/taylor-meyer)
- [go.wisc.edu/haley-trecker](https://go.wisc.edu/haley-trecker)

When you hear how QuickStart has influenced these students’ experiences at UW, you can see why we are eager to help future students participate in this effective program. And with the Day of the Badger gifts, we will be able to do just that.

The impact of Day of the Badger was felt beyond CALS as well. It extended across the entire campus. More than 5,700 gifts were made to UW from 49 states and 14 countries, raising more than $2.7 million. You can find more details and view a “thank you” video at [dayofthebadger.org](http://dayofthebadger.org). Thank you again for helping us achieve so much on Day of the Badger!

Kate VandenBosch, CALS Dean and Director

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**WALSAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021**

- **Pierce Dopp ’81 - 2021**
  - President
  - Wausau, WI

- **Taylor Fritsch ’14 - 2021**
  - Vice President
  - Madison, WI

- **Sherryl Pertzborn ’84, ’89 - 2021**
  - Treasurer
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- **Paul Patterson ’86 - 2022**
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- **Kara Luettke**
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- **Brandi Funk**
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- **Karen Martin**
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- **Cory Brown FISC ’13 - 2021**
  - Belleville, WI

- **Shawn Conley ’96, ’99, ’01 - 2021**
  - Madison, WI

- **David Cooper ’89 - 2021**
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- **Adam Gaspar ’16 - 2021**
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- **Julie Larson ’86 - 2023**
  - Viroqua, WI

- **Kay Maas ’79, ’82 - 2022**
  - Pewaukee, WI

- **Jill Makovec ’00, ’02 - 2023**
  - Madison, WI

- **Michael Murphy ’87 - 2023**
  - DeWitt, IA

- **Scott Rasch ’93, ’97 - 2023**
  - Racine, WI

- **June Roush ’87 - 2023**
  - Middleton, WI

- **Brooke Trustem ’20 - 2023**
  - Evansville, WI

Continued from page 2.

The goal of a WALSAA mentoring program will be to meet a significant and increasing demand for students to gain insight from alumni mentors in preparation for their professional journey following graduation. We also feel that such a program will provide alumni mentors with a valuable experience to support and engage with students and their alma mater. It is our intention to work towards having a pilot program in place for the Fall 2021 semester.

WALSAA will be here for you, whether it’s in-person or virtually, to provide opportunities to connect with each other and your alma mater. We will continue sharing updates and information about upcoming activities and programs. Please check the WALSAA website ([WALSAA.org](http://WALSAA.org)) on a regular basis for updated information.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Pierce Dopp (B.S. 1981)
This year was a very new year for FISC. While we had to endure the struggles of COVID by going off-campus and online for the whole year, we made it a success. We were still able to offer four classes and provide the best opportunities we could. Next year is quickly approaching and we are looking forward to going back to in-person, hands-on classes again. We know that with COVID still lingering that things will be a little different. However, we are committed to ensuring the best experience for the next year's students as we have in the past.

I would like to thank Jennifer Blazek and Nina Wilson for giving this program such a bright spot of possibility. Your efforts have helped to get FISC through these tough times. I also want to thank WALSAA for its guidance and support during this pandemic. Lastly, I want to thank the students, without you there is no short course. We are glad that you continued to support us through this difficult time.

We are excited to attend events like Wisconsin Farm Technology Days and other events statewide to promote FISC during the offseason.

I can’t wait to get back and start a new year in 2021-2022.
Ryan Gehin • Dairy Science
Ryan Gehin is from Baraboo, Wisconsin, and a dairy science major at the UW. Participation in 4-H and youth dairy shows, combined with employment at a Wisconsin Holstein farm, spurred his interest in pursuing a career in dairy cattle nutrition consulting.

Gehin is a member of Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) fraternity where he is Vice Noble Ruler of Management and Operations. An active Badger Dairy Club member, he is currently the club’s Signage Chair for the 2021 World Dairy Expo. He is also very involved in Badger Navigators. Gehin has gained dairy cattle nutrition experience working on the farm, and now in the laboratory, at the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center where his duties presently include performing NDF (Neutral Detergent Fiber) analysis. He has also worked as an independent lawn care contractor for several years.

Gehin says, “Inside CALS you are not simply another cog in the wheel, but rather a member of a small family of students and faculty that support you, encourage you, and give you amazing opportunities.”

Sakar Gupta • Biology and Global Health
Sakar Gupta of Appleton, Wisconsin, is pursuing a double major in biology and global health at the UW. As part of his four-year Honors Research Program, he is currently researching pancreatic lineage differentiation at the Wisconsin Institute of Medical Research. Previously he was an undergraduate researcher with Tiny Earth Network, a group of students and instructors focused on “studentsourcing antibiotic discovery” at the Wisconsin Institute of Discovery.

Gupta is treasurer of the CALS Health and Research Society, on the executive board of the India Students Association, and a member of the Undergraduate Neuroscience Society. He works as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for Paratech Ambulance Service, and is a health coach at Wingra Family Clinic as part of Community Health Volunteers of Madison. He also finds time to tutor other students, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

Gupta is appreciative of his CALS experience saying, “It offers a variety of avenues through which one can explore their interests and further build upon them through research-based teaching, workshops and outreach activities.”

Since 1972, WALSAA has been THE alumni association of the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) and Farm and Industry Short Course (FISC).

WALSAA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that supports the connection of students, faculty and alumni to the UW-Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences.

Wisconsin Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni Association
P.O. Box 5177
Madison, WI 53705-5177
608.438.1994
admin@walsaa.org
Lauren Lansing • Biology and Global Health
Lauren Lansing grew up in La Crosse, Wisconsin. She is pursuing a bachelor of science in biology with Honors in Research, along with a degree in global health and a leadership certificate, fields of study that will prepare her well for a career post-COVID-19.

Lansing is a member of the Health Occupations Students of America, Wisconsin Pre-Medical Society and UW Swim Club. As a freshman, she was a member of the CALS Health and Research Society and took an Emerging Leaders Program. She is currently part of the Gundersen Health System Osteoporosis Research Team. In addition to her studies, she works in a research laboratory on campus and as a resident assistant in a local assisted living facility.

Lansing says, “Due to the interdisciplinary nature and relatively smaller size of CALS, students have the chance to foster better relationships with each other and the faculty. CALS really has a supportive atmosphere that extends beyond ‘Midwest nice’ and as a student I feel very supported.”

Kalina Larsen • Genetics and Genomics and Communication
Kalina Larsen comes to the UW from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is in the Honors in Research Program and pursuing degrees in both genetics and genomics and life sciences communication.

Larsen credits the CALS QuickStart Program for making her aware of the countless opportunities on campus. Larsen is currently on the executive board of WSUM Madison Student Radio where she also hosts a radio show as a music DJ. She is public relations chair for the Polish Students’ Association and as a freshman belonged to the CALS Health and Research Organization. Her busy schedule also includes work as a student assistant in CALS’s Office of Academic Affairs.

Larsen’s most valued experience since coming to CALS has been as an undergraduate researcher in two different laboratories. She states: “These research opportunities have helped me apply the knowledge I learn in the classroom to real experiments. They have shaped my understanding of science and given me new perspectives into what career path I hope to pursue.”

Lydia Larsen • Genetics and Genomics and Communication
Lydia Larsen is from Neenah, Wisconsin, and pursuing a double major in genetics and genomics and life sciences communication. In the future, she hopes to take her technical and communication skills and use them to foster meaningful conversations about the future of genomic technology.

Larsen is a staff writer for the Journal of Undergraduate Science and Technology (JUST) and a member of the Undergraduate Genetics Association. As a freshman, she was part of the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Learning Community in Waters Residence Hall and in the UW Jazz Orchestra. She is currently a research assistant in a campus laboratory that utilizes whole genome sequencing in its work.

“One of my single, most formative experiences at CALS was participation in the CALS QuickStart program,” says Larsen, who continues to participate in QuickStart meetings where they discuss the program and suggest improvements. “I would tell a high school senior that QuickStart, and other CALS programs such as freshman seminars, are part of what makes CALS so special.”

Continued on next page
Olivia Spaight • Dairy Science and Communication

Olivia Spaight of Waterford, Wisconsin, is pursuing majors in dairy science and life sciences communication at the UW, as well as a certificate in agricultural business management. Her goal is to become an advocate and communicator for the dairy industry, something she gained experience at as Racine County Agriculture Ambassador a couple years ago.

Spaight is a member of the Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA) where she won the Outstanding Freshman award and is currently activities coordinator. She is very involved in Badger Dairy Club, the Collegiate Farm Bureau where she is the Agriculture in the Classroom coordinator, and the National Agri-Marketing Association. Spaight works in a research laboratory on campus and at the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center.

Spaight says, “CALS has given me the opportunity to grow from an introverted, solely academically engaged freshman to an involved, well-rounded leader within campus organizations and my local community. CALS is an exceptional place for those pursuing higher education to engage in activities that encourage personal growth, professional development, and academic success.”

McKenzie Trinko • Animal Science

McKenzie Trinko hails from Shawano, Wisconsin. Part of the CALS Honors in Research Program, Trinko is pursuing a degree in animal science and a certificate in French. She has already completed a certificate in equine reproductive management. Her goal is to go to veterinary school.

Trinko is the CALS Student Association Representative for the Pre-Veterinary Association. She holds other leadership roles in the Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA), UW Polo Club and Badger Hunting Club. Trinko works in a dairy animal welfare research lab on campus and is a veterinary assistant at a local veterinary clinic. She remains active in her FFA Chapter and has been in the Wisconsin State FFA Honors Band and Jazz Band for five consecutive years.

Trinko took part in the CALS QuickStart Program and found the program so beneficial she subsequently took a public relations/outreach position with QuickStart to work with potential first-year students. From her own experience, she says, “CALS is incredibly engaging, welcoming and supportive for all of its students.”

Oyen says, “CALS does a phenomenal job of providing opportunities to students to help them find their calling and ensure they have the best college experience and professional qualifications for their futures.”

Tanner Oyen • Agronomy

Tanner Oyen grew up in Lancaster, Wisconsin, and is pursuing a degree in agronomy and a certificate in business management. Thanks to hard work, a condensed schedule and a supportive advisor, Oyen plans to graduate a year early so he can begin a career in crop and plant science.

Oyen is a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) fraternity, treasurer of the Badger Crops Club, and vice-president of internal affairs for the Forex Investment Club. Last fall, he volunteered as the agronomy representative at the CALS Major Fair. As a result of his lab assistant work in the Cereals Breeding & Quantitative Genetics Laboratory, he was selected as a Hillsdale Sophomore Research Fellow.

Oyen was president of his FFA chapter and won awards in state and national FFA agronomy contests. Summer internships have furthered his agronomy experience.

2021 Outstanding Sophomore Award Recipients
Olivia Van Hammond • Global Health

As a global health major, Olivia Van Hammond of Appleton, Wisconsin, is already contributing to the health care profession both on and off campus.

Van Hammond is a UW House Fellow and part of Badger SPILL (Supporting Peers in Laidback Listening). As social chair for the Aspiring Physician Assistant Association she created a mentoring program for students. She is a member of the Health Occupations Students of America. In addition to volunteering at a local food pantry and maintaining a 4.0 GPA, Van Hammond is a research assistant at Westmark Laboratory and has been accepted into the Undergraduate Research Scholars program. As a certified nursing assistant, Van Hammond has worked in a long-term care home and is now assisting COVID-19 patients at Thedacare Hospital. She is also helping University Health Services test UW students and staff for COVID.

As Van Hammond says, “I would not be the student and person I am if it were not for CALS and the amazing support and opportunities it has provided me.”

Alexis Wery • Genetics and Genomics

Alexis (Lexi) Wery is a first generation college student from Brussels, Wisconsin, pursuing a degree in genetics and genomics with a certificate in global health. She is part of the CALS Honors in Research program. Her career goal is to conduct medical research that will find effective, and affordable, healthcare treatments for all patients.

Wery credits the CALS QuickStart program with making her aware of the abundant organizations, services and experiences available at the UW. Wery is a member of the Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA) and the Undergraduate Genetics Association where she is volunteer committee chair. She works as a laboratory research assistant in the Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology and the Department of Horticulture. She has also volunteered at the Madison Children’s Museum.

Wery says participation in CALS student organizations has not only enriched her education and helped prepare her for her career, but “shows that despite having ambitious career goals, one can personalize their college experience in a variety of ways.”

Congratulations to all of our 2021 Outstanding Sophomore Award recipients!

We are proud of all of our 2021 Outstanding Sophomore Award recipients and look forward to what they will accomplish in the years to come. We would also like to thank all of the applicants for this year’s award and wish them good luck as they finish school.

The ability for WALSA to provide this type of support is at the core of its mission and solidifies its connection to CALS. Starting with donations and continuing with annual silent auctions, WALSA has been able to generate continued scholarship support over many years to deserving students of CALS. If you are interested in supporting students and advisors, visit www.WALSA.org.
WALSAA has been honoring advisors with the Outstanding Advisor Award since 1979. This year’s recipient is Katie Butzen.

Butzen is an advisor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences who has been with the department for 3.5 years. As an advisor, Butzen’s job is to assist undergraduate and graduate students with any questions or concerns, but she has always gone above and beyond for her students. Butzen has helped support 131 students since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic arrived at UW-Madison.

Even though Butzen has a large number of students to advise, she is always accessible and willing to help in any way possible. Butzen has a vast knowledge of happenings around the nutritional sciences department and campus, which makes her weekly emails to students, faculty, and staff all the more helpful. Her main goal is to improve the professional and mental wellbeing of all students. This is especially applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite her busy schedule, Butzen has time blocked out each week entirely dedicated to connecting with students.

Butzen has helped out the nutritional sciences department in other ways as well. She is dedicated to making the department more diverse. Butzen has worked with graduate students on increasing their racial awareness by assisting them on creating a diversity letter, as well as hosting a town hall to discuss important issues. One year, Butzen even traveled to Hawaii to expand the department’s recruitment efforts. Butzen’s dedication also extends to student organizations. She assisted in coordinating and organizing UW-Madison’s first Food Justice Conference with the nutritional science student organizations Campus Food Shed and Slow Food UW.

Butzen’s dedication and passion to the department and students make her a worthy recipient of the WALSAA Outstanding Advisor Award.

Congratulations, Katie!
Join fellow WALSAA members for a night of baseball with the Wisconsin Woodchucks in Wausau on Wednesday, July 14, 2021 versus the Green Bay Booyah. Gates open at 5:35 p.m. with the first pitch at 6:35 p.m. We have reserved tickets in the TDSfiber.com Bullpen picnic area along the first baseline. Included in the ticket cost is a food and drink package that includes several ballpark food options and two drink tickets, for $20 per person. Reserve your tickets right away, as we have a limited number of tickets for the event. Register online at www.WALSAA.org, or you can mail in this form. Registrations are $20 per ticket. For more information, contact WALSAA at admin@walsaa.org or 608.438.1994.

Name: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________________________ City, State & Zip Code: __________________________________________________________________

Phone #: __________________________ Email: ______________________________________________________________________

Names for name tags: __________________________________________________________________________________________

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Make checks payable to: WALSAA
Mail registration and payment to:
WALSAA, PO Box 5177, Madison, WI 53705
Registration MUST BE POSTMARKED by July 10.
After that date, tickets can be purchased online or by contacting WALSAA at 608.438.1994.
The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) and Farm and Industry Short Course (FISC) alumni and friends are invited to the annual WALSAA summer picnic during the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days. It will be held on **Tuesday, July 20 from 4 to 7 p.m.** at Florian Gardens, 2340 Lorch Avenue, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. A backyard grill-out will be served including burgers, brats and grilled chicken will be served with cold beverages to wash them down after a great day at the show. Side dishes and fresh baked cookies will also be served. Join us to catch up with old friends, network with new friends and enjoy the beautiful gardens. The host of the 2021 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is Huntsinger Farms, W3020 Michell Road, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The 2021 WALSAA Farm and Industry Short Course Reunion will be held in conjunction with the picnic. A short program for the FISC Reunion will begin at 6 p.m. with presentations for the Friend of Short Course and Service to Agriculture awards. We will have a 50/50 raffle to help raise scholarship funds for deserving FISC students. FISC alumni and supporters are encouraged to bring others who might have an interest in supporting the FISC program. Varsity sponsors include American Foods Group and Compeer Financial. Daluge Travel and Wisconsin Corn Growers Association are Red sponsors for this year’s reunion. Register online at www.WALSAA.org, or you can mail in this form. Register by July 10 for $15. Registrations will also be accepted the day of the event for $20. For more information, contact WALSAA at admin@walsaa.org or 608.438.1994.

**VARSITY SPONSORS:**

![Varsity Sponsors](image)

**RED SPONSORS:**

![Red Sponsors](image)

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Follow WALSAA on social media at:

www.facebook.com/WALSAAUW
www.twitter.com/WALSAA
www.linkedin.com/groups/4695448/profile

Sorry We Missed You
In the last issue of the WALSAA Express, we inadvertently omitted these donors in our donor listing. Below are additions to our 2020 donor list. Thank you for your generosity to our CALS and FISC students!

WALSAA SOCIETY
($1,000 or greater)
Martin and Kathleen Burkhardt
WI Public Service Foundation

BABCOCK HALL CLUB
($250-$499)
Fidelity Charitable
Robert and Vivian Miller

OTHER
(Less than $50)
Erin Muths

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 14 • WALSAA Fan Deck Event
Wisconsin Woodchucks, Wausau

July 20 • Summer Picnic & FISC Reunion
Florian Gardens, Eau Claire

Sept 11 • WALSAA Football Fire-Up
UW Foundation, Madison

The WALSAA board continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic situation. We will communicate any event changes through our website, newsletter, email and social media channels.