



Your CALS Connection For Life

Student Organizations and WALSAA IMPACT Grants

WALSAA IMPACT Grants

WALSAA IMPACT Grants were started to recognize student organizations that provide innovative programs for students. With the help of donations from WALSAA members and matching funds from CALS, more organizations have been able to receive funding. This year's recipients included:

- Beta Beta Beta Biological Honors Society
- CALS Health and Research Society
- Food Science Club
- Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences Club
- Plant Science Graduate Student Council
- Quarter-Scale Tractor Team
- Saddle and Sirloin Club
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Chapter of the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA)

To highlight the importance of student organizations, we spoke with recent alumni about their student organization experiences and how it shaped their future careers.



Taylor Fritsch

Class of 2014 - Agriculture & applied economics and life sciences communication

Taylor Fritsch graduated from UW-Madison in 2014 with degrees in agriculture and applied economics and life sciences communication before attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to focus on agriculture and environmental law. As an undergraduate, Fritsch was a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity (AGR), Badger Dairy Club (BDC), Collegiate Farm Bureau (CFB), NAMA, and Saddle

and Sirloin Club.

Fritsch was highly involved in the establishment of UW-Madison's CFB chapter. He believed it was important to have a campus organization dedicated to advocating for agriculture and bringing students together across many agricultural disciplines. CFB has received support from WALSAA in the past to help set up student study tours. These study tours take students on a variety of agricultural and food industry tours to help increase their awareness of career opportunities within those fields.

Today, Fritsch is an environmental and regulatory attorney at Michael Best & Friedrich, a full-service law firm. His practice focuses on counseling agribusiness, food and beverage, and energy industry clients on a wide range of regulatory matters. He said his interest in CFB helped foster his interest in law and policy, as it relates to agriculture.

Welcome to the Student Organizations and WALSAA IMPACT Grant features!

Each year, WALSAA awards several student organizations with funding for different activities. In 2018, WALSAA awarded eight student organizations with IMPACT Grants. The award recognizes student organizations that provide innovative programs for students. Continue reading to learn more about the impact student organizations have had on different alumni, students and their careers.

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**

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Sara Griswold

Class of 2018 - Life sciences communication

Sara Griswold graduated from UW-Madison with a degree in life sciences communication in 2018. Griswold was a member of several student orgs for all four years of her college career, including the Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA), BDC, CFB, NAMA and Collegiate Dairy Judging.

Griswold wanted to be involved in student orgs before she got accepted to UW-Madison because she knew they would help her meet other students with similar interests and help her apply what she learned in the classroom to a real-world setting. She said each organization had its own unique qualities that brought her an opportunity to learn and develop a new skill. Through these organizations, Griswold received opportunities to plan and organize different agriculture advocacy events on campus, learn marketing techniques utilized in different agricultural businesses from study tours, and attend different conferences to learn more about agriculture throughout the country.

AWA and NAMA both received IMPACT Grants during her time on campus, and they were able to use those grants to fund trips to local businesses and other networking events to meet professionals within the agriculture industry. Griswold said the student organizations she was a member of taught her the real-life knowledge and skills she needed to succeed in her current position as the dairy marketing lead at ANIMART.



Sara Harn

Class of 2016 - Dairy science and agricultural business management

Sara Harn graduated with degrees in dairy science and agricultural business management from UW-Madison in 2016. Harn belonged to several student organizations throughout her undergraduate career. She was a member of AWA for three and a half years, BDC for two years, and CFB and NAMA for one year each.

Harn joined these organizations because she wanted to learn from her peers and have different hands-on experiences outside of the classroom. Although she was able to learn skills from each of them, Harn felt AWA had the most impact on her. Harn said the purpose of AWA is to help members prepare for a career in agriculture and agriculture-related fields, aid women in agriculture to help them achieve their goals, and improve communication among women in agriculture, and for the general betterment of agriculture.

Aside from meeting some of her best friends, Harn said the networking and career-related workshops provided her with the most benefit when it came to finding a career. She has worked at Filament, a marketing agency with only agriculture-related clients, for nearly three years. With the networking skills she developed in AWA, the industry knowledge she gained from BDC and CFB, and the marketing prowess she developed in NAMA, Harn has been able to work her way up from an intern to a full-time marketing associate within the company.

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Taylor Holterman

Class of 2015 - Life sciences communication

Taylor Holterman graduated from UW-Madison with a degree in life sciences communication and a certificate in entrepreneurship in 2015. She has been a sales manager with Union Pacific Railroad for three and a half years. While she was at UW-Madison, Holterman was an active member of AWA, CFB and BDC.

Holterman was very interested in getting involved in CALS and the many different student organizations on campus. She felt AWA, CFB and BDC aligned the most with her interests and backgrounds. Her mother and sister were active AWA members when they attended UW-Madison and she felt it would help her develop personally and professionally. CFB provided her with an outlet to promote all types of agriculture as well as network with different ag students and industry leaders at conferences. Lastly, BDC gave her a tie to her family's dairy farm and allowed her to learn even more about the industry she grew up in.

Of the student orgs she was involved in, Holterman believed AWA had the most impact on her college experience and future career. As the AWA student vice-president, she managed all communications to members, organized committees, and encouraged and created venues for officers to utilize their respective committees. In this role, she received invaluable leadership experience through service and etiquette events, networking dinners, resume reviews, formal interview training, and other professional workshops. With these training opportunities under her belt, Holterman was well-prepared and confident when it came to applying and interviewing for her current position.



Brooke Trustem

Class of 2020 - Dairy science and agricultural business management

Brooke Trustem is currently a junior majoring in dairy science and agricultural business management, and pursuing a certificate in environmental studies. Trustem was raised on her family's 2,500-cow dairy farm, and she plans to return home for work on the farm after graduation and play an active role in her local community and the dairy industry. For this reason, and by the recommendation of her peers, Trustem chose to get involved with AWA, BDC, and CFB, and she is also a member of the CALS Student Association.

These student organizations appealed to Trustem because of their dedication to promote agriculture on campus, volunteer and professional skill development opportunities, and networking events with alumni. She believes BDC has had the most impact on her time on campus because it has helped open her eyes to the many different opportunities within the dairy industry. Through BDC, she gets to volunteer at World Dairy Expo and make unique connections with industry professionals, they go on farm tours and attend conferences with dairy science students from other schools, and they also get to promote dairy on campus.

Trustem said, since joining these organizations, she has taken on several leadership roles and committed to serve others within the organizations. She has enjoyed planning meetings and events and making sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the end-result. Long-term, Trustem believes it is the training and experiences she receives from these student organizations and leadership roles that will allow her to be successful in a management role on her family's dairy farm.

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Savannah Waller

Class of 2017 - Agronomy and life sciences communication

Savannah Waller graduated from UW-Madison with bachelor's degrees in agronomy and life sciences communication in 2017. Waller has been an account manager at Rhea + Kaiser, an integrated marketing communications agency, for a year. During college, she was a four-year member of AWA and CFB, and a two-year member of NAMA.

Coming into college, Waller knew she wanted to explore a career in marketing while remaining close to her agricultural roots. CFB helped her learn more about ag policy and meet new people on campus. She joined AWA because of her background in crop farming, and she knew she would find a group of friends with similar interests. AWA also helped her develop professional and leadership skills, which she learned at several professional development events and etiquette dinners AWA helped put together with the assistance of a WALSAA IMPACT Grant.

Waller said NAMA had the most impact on her time on campus and her current career. Through NAMA, she was able to find her passion in ag marketing and determine her career path after graduating. She was also a member of the student marketing presentation team, which helped improve her public speaking skills. With the help of WALSAA IMPACT Grants, the student NAMA team was able to travel to the NAMA Student Marketing Team Competition and compete against other schools, winning the championship two times in the last three years. Waller said NAMA also helped her get her current job. She said her current employer received her resume from National NAMA and reached out to her when they were hiring.



Calvin Winkel

Class of 2018 - Biological systems engineering

Calvin Winkel graduated from UW-Madison with a biological systems engineering degree in 2018. During his time on campus, Winkel was a member of AGR, the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE), and BDC for five years, and a member of the UW-Madison Quarter-Scale Tractor Team for four years.

Winkel felt these organizations aligned well with his professional interests, provided a strong connection to agriculture, and prepared him for his current job as a structural analysis engineer for Case IH. He felt AGR and the Quarter-Scale Tractor Team had the biggest influence on his professional development. He said AGR provided him with a peer group for support as well as a group to turn to for help with preparing his resume and other professional advice.

Winkel said the Quarter-Scale Tractor Team had the largest impact on his current career. Within this team, he tested his technical skills to design, build and test a tractor, while developing leadership skills within a team setting and as the team captain during his senior year. Within the Quarter-Scale Tractor Team, Winkel said he had the opportunity to try different components of engineering, such as design, manufacturing, testing, product knowledge, and sales, and this helped him determine what he enjoyed and where he wanted to take his career. The Quarter-Scale Tractor Team received IMPACT Grants in 2017 and 2018, and the team was able to use the grants to compete at the international level, providing an invaluable networking and real-world experience.

The ability for WALSAA 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, WALSAA 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.WALSAA.org.