

The Jimmys Return to the WALSAA Football Fire-Up!



WALSAA is thrilled to welcome back The Jimmys to the WALSAA Football Fire-Up on Saturday, Sept. 20! Not only will they be lighting up the stage with their award-winning, high-energy, funky blues sound—they're also proudly supporting the event as Varsity Level sponsors. From the family dairy farm to the international blues scene, bandleader Jimmy Voegeli brings talent, heart, and Badger pride to everything he does.

The WALSAA Football Fire-Up is more than just a celebration of music and community—it's a cornerstone fundraiser to support student scholarships for UW-Madison CALS. Every ticket purchased and every sponsor, like The Jimmys, helps open doors for the next generation of agricultural and life sciences leaders.

Jimmy Voegeli, a proud CALS alumnus himself, lives a life that harmonizes farming and music. By day, he's on his family's sixth-generation dairy farm, robotically milking 130 purebred Brown Swiss cows, managing 1,500 acres, and exporting genetics around the globe.

By night, Jimmy leads The Jimmys—an electrifying blues band that's made its mark across the U.S. and Europe. Jimmy grew up in a house filled with music, and though he once flunked high school band, he turned that "F" into the title of his debut solo album, "F is for Blues." Since then, he's earned accolades including multiple Madison Area Music Awards (MAMA) and Wisconsin Area Music Industry (WAMI) awards and was inducted into the MAMA Hall of Fame.

Formed in 2009, The Jimmys have released five critically acclaimed albums and collected more than 30 awards. Their lineup includes some of the best musicians: Perry Weber on guitar, Johnny Wartenweiler on bass, Chris Sandoval on drums, Pete Ross on saxophones and clarinet, and Joe Goltz on trombone. They've shared the stage with legends like Buddy Guy, Keb' Mo', and Marcia Ball, and recorded internationally including a live album in Romania.

Don't miss The Jimmys on September 20! Come enjoy the music, connect with alumni and friends, and support a cause that changes lives. WALSAA is deeply grateful to The Jimmys for their Varsity Level sponsorship and for helping fuel student success at CALS through scholarships.

walsaa Our College,
Creating Connections for 50 Years Our Connection

New Legacy Members

Liv Abegglen, B.S. '27
Brady Anderson, B.S. '27
Natalia Badillo, B.S. '25
Ellie Baudhuin, B.S. '27
Claudia Biebel, B.S. '25
Brandon Boyd, B.S. '27
Nathan Buckley, B.S. '27
Derek Gehin, B.S. '27
Kelsey Hardy, B.S. '27
Naureen Kamal, B.S. '27
Sydney Kolstad, B.S. '25
Samantha Mahlum, B.S. '25
Brianna Meyer, B.S. '27
Adaobi Nnamuchi, B.S. '27
Musaab Tareen, B.S. '27
Colin Van De Loo, B.S. '25
Rianne Wagner, B.S. '25

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Building a Future That Is Uniquely Yours



June Roush, WALSAA President

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we welcome the summer season, I find myself reflecting on the incredible momentum we've already built in 2025. This year has started with great energy, purpose, and heartfelt celebration as WALSAA continues the longstanding tradition of supporting students through scholarships and grants.

This cycle brought in our largest pool of applicants in recent years – a testament to the growing visibility and impact of our alumni network. The selection process, which is one of WALSAA's most meaningful annual undertakings, required countless hours of thoughtful evaluation by our Board of Directors and dedicated volunteers. This commitment culminated in one of the most rewarding events of the year: the annual awards banquet.

As president, I had the distinct honor of meeting the scholarship recipients, along with their families and friends, and presenting their well-deserved awards. It was an emotional experience and one that left a lasting impression. Witnessing the pride in their eyes, hearing their stories, and celebrating their accomplishments reminded me why WALSAA's mission is so vital.



2025 WALSAA Outstanding Sophomore Award Recipients

Here are a few excerpts from my closing remarks at the banquet that I'd like to share with you:

"Today we recognize not only your hard work and dedication but also your potential to make a lasting impact on the world. As scholarship recipients, you represent the best of what our community has to offer, and we are incredibly proud of you.

"You have earned this recognition through perseverance, excellence, and a drive to push beyond the limits. We, as alumni, remember what it was like to walk in your shoes – navigating the excitement and challenges of college life, making decisions that shape the future, and dreaming big. As you move forward with your academic and professional journey, the most important thing you can do is to continue believing in the power of those dreams!

"One of the most valuable lessons I've learned is that success is not just about where you end up, but about the journey itself. With each class you take, every friendship you form, and each challenge you overcome, you're building a future that is uniquely yours!"

Tears welled up in my eyes as I delivered these words. It's hard not to be moved when you hear the bios of these remarkable students. Each one is a testament to resilience, passion, and the transformative power of education. Their stories are both humbling and inspiring.

Congratulations once again to our scholarship recipients. You are the future of agricultural and life sciences, and we are proud to be part of your journey.

Thank you to all the alumni, supporters, and board members who make these moments possible. Together, we continue to strengthen the legacy of CALS and WALSAA – rooted in community, driven by purpose, and growing with pride.

Warmly,
June Meixelsperger Roush

RED JACKET AWARD NOMINATIONS

WALSAA is seeking nominations for the 2025 WALSAA Daluge Red Jacket Award. The Red Jacket Award was established in 2016 in recognition of lifetime service to WALSAA. It is named after two of WALSAA's alumni, Rick and Peggy Daluge. A red jacket will be presented to someone who has helped WALSAA grow each year in their honor. Nomination form available at www.WALSAA.org. Please send your nominations to WALSAA, PO Box 5177, Madison, WI 53705-5177, or email to admin@walsaa.org by July 1.

CALS MESSAGE



A Stronger Wisconsin

For decades, CALS has partnered with family farms across Wisconsin. Andy Diercks BS'93, a fourth-generation farmer, and extension specialist and plant pathology department chair, Amanda Gevens, collaborate to promote healthy potato harvests. Supporting CALS and UW–Madison means supporting Wisconsin family farms. Ensuring quality crops and long-term viability for local farms is just one of the ways we're impacting our state and the lives of residents.

go.wisc.edu/potato-wi-impact

Summer Field Days

Summer is field day season at the CALS Agricultural Research Stations. Over the course of the growing season, the stations host more than a dozen public events to share research updates and educational information with agricultural professionals, home gardeners and others.

cals.wisc.edu/fielddays



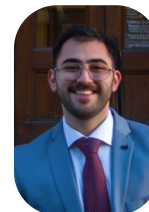
Spring Graduate Spotlights

Congratulations to our Spring 2025 graduates! Meet some of our newest CALS alumni at cals.wisc.edu/recent-alumni



Cindy Dong

*Life Sciences
Communication,
Global Health*



Mohamed AlMulla

*Genetics & Genomics,
Agronomy*



Mason Polencheck

Microbiology



Sam Anhalt

*Biological Systems
Engineering*

Advocate for UW–Madison

We need alumni like you to speak up about issues that affect our students and faculty. Find out how you can support the UW.



uwalumni.com/advocate

2025 WALSAA FOOTBALL FIRE-UP

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, September 20 at UW-Foundation

WHAT: WALSAA continues a 53-year mission to connect alumni, students and friends of CALS at UW-Madison. Join us in Badger spirit to listen to great music from The Jimmys, bid on auction items and support student scholarships.

WHEN: Saturday, September 20 - 3 hours before kick-off of the Badgers vs. Maryland game

WHERE: UW-Foundation parking lot,
1848 University Ave, Madison

Seeking sponsors & silent auction
donations contact admin@walsaa.org



***Scan or register at
walsaa.org***



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Our Connection**

2025 Senior Impact Award Recipients



Claudia Biebel

Claudia Biebel of Pewaukee, Wis., is graduating with a biochemistry degree and certificates in global health and disability rights and services from the UW. A pivotal health experience earlier in her life has ignited her desire to become a physician and understand how a patient's environment shapes their health. Biebel's positivity and commitment to community engagement and healthcare equity has been evident throughout her time at CALS.

Her participation in the UW Agriculture, Health & Nutrition and UW Mobile Clinics & Health Care study abroad programs in Uganda enriched her learning. As a result of these two Uganda trips, she revived the Village Health Project (VHP), a CALS student organization

that supports sustainable projects and improves sanitation and nutrition, while empowering the welfare of a community in Uganda. As co-director of VHP, she applied for, and received, the Knapp Bequest Grant to fund the installation and upkeep of six water tanks in Uganda. Biebel is the co-founder of Care for a Cause (CFAC), an organization that aims to address the financial burden of parenthood through volunteer work, and bolstered the group's membership from just six freshmen to now over 300+ active volunteers. She is presently the group's vice-president of volunteer education.

Biebel is a certified nursing assistant at UW Health in the Trauma and Life Support Unit and a crisis intervention volunteer at Domestic Abuse Intervention Services. She previously had an internship at Orthopaedic Associates of Wisconsin and was a nursing assistant in her hometown's hospital. She co-founded the Women's Reproductive Health Awareness Club and was its projects and events executive member. Biebel is an undergraduate researcher in the Department of Nutritional Sciences' Pierre Lab and has received a Cargill-Benevenga Research stipend to conduct her own research project. She is also a testing and evaluations proctor for the UW-Madison and McBurney Disability Resource Center, a mentor to younger students in the Biochemistry Department, and an active member of her Alpha Xi Delta sorority. Biebel says, "Being part of CALS has uniquely prepared me to turn ideas into action while providing service to the UW-Madison and the larger community. Being a part of CALS is the best decision I could have made."



Veronica Goveas

Veronica Goveas is a biology major from Menomonee Falls, Wis., also graduating with certificates in biocore and global health. She has been on the CALS Honors in Research track and was an WALSAA Outstanding Sophomore award winner in 2023. Goveas plans a career in medicine. She credits CALS with making her realize that "healthcare isn't solely about biology; it's about understanding people's stories and emotional needs...addressing both the physiological and emotional aspects of care is essential." She hopes "to shape a healthcare system that removes financial, social and emotional barriers so that everyone has access to the care they deserve."

Goveas is philanthropy director for the Senior Class Office and organizes fundraising initiatives to support mental health and suicide prevention at the UW. As a sophomore, she was a CALS ambassador. Goveas provides private tutoring to female students in chemistry and physics courses. She has worked in research labs at the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center and Medical College of Wisconsin. She is currently a researcher and Hildale Fellow in the UW School of Medicine and Public Health's Ciucci Lab, as well as a student researcher in the Department of Chemistry's Boydston Lab. Last year, she participated in a CALS study abroad program in Tanzania. Goveas is a volunteer at the UW Health Inpatient Psychiatric Unit, a rehabilitation therapist assistant at UW Hospitals and Clinics Authority and has shadowed medical professionals at hospitals to expand her learning. She previously volunteered at a local Rape Crisis Center and was vice-president of the Wisconsin HOSA – Future Health Professionals Postsecondary/Collegiate Division. She is a judging/VIP director for a collegiate Indian classical dance competition at the UW. In high school, she earned the 2021 Distinguished Young Women of Wisconsin award and was a national finalist.

Goveas says, "CALS has shaped me into a compassionate researcher, leader and individual, equipping me with the tools to navigate both professional and personal challenges. The CALS journey is not only about academic success, but also about finding purpose and meaning in everything you do." She advises undecided students considering CALS to: "embrace discovery; seek mentorship early; take risks; engage with your community; and ask the right questions."

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2025 Senior Impact Award Recipients

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Samantha Mahlum

Samantha “Sam” Mahlum of Germantown, Wis., is graduating this spring with a degree in biochemistry and a certificate in athletic healthcare. Mahlum is president of the UW’s Senior Class of 2025. She, along with other senior class officers, work in partnership with Student Affairs, the Office of the Chancellor, and the Wisconsin Alumni Association & Foundation to create an unforgettable senior class experience. She is a member of the Cabinet of Student Leaders where she can directly influence decisions that impact student life at the UW.

Mahlum transferred to Madison after a year at Ball State University in Indiana and quickly embraced the opportunity at CALS to “engage with a wide variety of STEM-focused students from different disciplines and interact with a diverse range of students across other majors.” Mahlum is a research assistant in the School of Medicine and Public Health’s Pediatrics Department where she works in-person and virtually as part of the Brain, Behavior and Wellbeing Study and has presented findings at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. She was a board member and events coordinator for the UW MEDLIFE chapter. During her time with MEDLIFE, she travelled to Costa Rica as part of a medical service-learning trip where they provided medical care to low income communities. Mahlum is a Badger SPILL (Student Peers in Laidback Listening) program supporter, an organization that helps students facing mental health or personal struggles. She was a member and junior safety officer with the Badger Powerlifting Club. A lifelong Girl Scout and now lifetime member, Mahlum has volunteered with the Girl Scout program and American Red Cross. As a certified nursing assistant, she has worked in a memory care unit of a senior living community in her hometown, and in the neurology unit of UW Health Hospital.

Mahlum hopes to pursue a master’s program in anesthesiology and become an anesthesiology assistant. She says, “CALS offers endless opportunities to explore and impact the world around you. Here, your passion for making a difference can turn into real-world change. As the next generation of STEM workers, we have the opportunity to shape the future in ways we can’t yet fully imagine.”



Colin Van De Loo

Colin Van De Loo of Kaukauna, Wis., transferred two years ago from the UW-Oshkosh – Fox Cities campus to UW-Madison where he is now completing his degree in agronomy with a certificate in global health. As a result of his dual passion for agriculture and medicine, he plans to continue with the master’s of agronomy program here at UW-Madison, specializing in crop management and protection, and then attend medical school and become a rural physician. He foresees no better time to integrate these fields of study into his goal of utilizing sustainable agriculture as a means to improve public and global health.

Van De Loo is a research assistant in the Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences’ Kohmann Lab. He is vice president of the UW’s Doctors Without Borders Student Chapter where he helps organize and conduct fundraisers and volunteering opportunities such as putting personal hygiene kits together for the Madison Street Medicine program. He is currently part of the UW Surgical Shadowing program. As an organizer and trainer for “Stop the Bleed,” Van Loon conducts community training sessions on life-saving bleeding control techniques. He is an organizer for UW Med Flight tours, works as an election official for the city of Madison, assists with American Red Cross blood drives, and tutors students from K-12 to college level. He spent three summers as a camp leader at the SOAR Camp Onaway near Waupaca. Van De Loo works as a clinical and surgical technician at Valley Eye Associates in Appleton. In January 2024, he volunteered with Liga International to assist with eye surgeries and pre/post operative patient care in underserved communities in Mexico. He remains very involved in his family’s large dairy and crop farm.

Van De Loo says, “CALS prepares you for a future that makes a difference, whether in agriculture, health or beyond. My journey through CALS has not only deepened my understanding of the interconnectedness of agriculture and global health, but also equipped me with the skills, experiences and connections to continue to make a meaningful impact in my future career, community and the world. This is the Wisconsin Idea and I have adopted its practice.”

2025 Sprecher Award Recipients

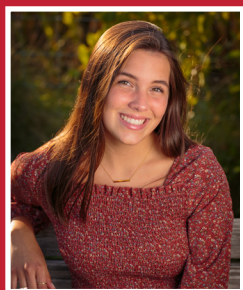


Natalia Badillo

Natalia Badillo of Racine, Wis., is graduating this spring with degrees in biology and global health and a certificate in leadership. "CALS has been a transformative part of my personal and professional journey," she says, "providing a foundation that has empowered me as a Latina, a first-generation college graduate, and an aspiring physician dedicated to advancing health equity and equality." Her advice to students still deciding on their field of study at CALS: "Seek support from experienced CALS advisors; engage in hands-on learning; join a supportive community and/or student organization; take classes which interest you, not just the required ones; and find a way to make a local/global impact."

Badillo is president of the Latine Student Union, chair of public affairs for the Professional Association of Latinx Students for Medical School Access, and a member of the Latino Health Council and UW Diversity and Inclusion Student Advisory Board. She was a CALS student ambassador and on the Latine Heritage Month Planning Committee. Known for her strong work ethic, Badillo has been a valued research and lab assistant in the Abbott Endocrinology and Reproductive Systems Research Lab where she has connected with research surrounding polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) which has led to work with the Wisconsin National Primate Center. She has also been an assistant in a Chemistry Department lab. She is a volunteer medical assistant and interpreter at Our Lady of Hope Clinic in Madison. As a member of the UW Swim Club, Badillo has been a national team member for four years and a National Championship finalist twice. She has been a counselor at a camp for children with heart disease, a lifeguard, and a youth health and fitness coordinator at the McFarland Youth Center.

Badillo is part of the Rural and Urban Scholars Community Health Program (RUSCH), a pre-med pathway program developed by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. Providing healthcare to women and underserved Latine communities is her goal as a physician. As she states, "Through my work I hope to inspire other first-generation students, particularly Latinas, to dream big and believe in their potential."



Sydney Kolstad

Sydney Kolstad is from Fond du Lac, Wis., and graduating with a 4.0 GPA in genetics and genomics and neurobiology, plus a certificate in global health. The tragic loss of Kolstad's brother due to depression during her sophomore year has motivated her to pursue a career in research where she can honor her brother by having a stake in finding and developing new technologies, treatments and medications for depression. This has put her on a path to attend graduate school, obtain a doctorate, and become an expert in a field of genetics or neuroscience where she can become a leader and strong voice for this subject. She has recently been accepted to UW-Madison's Genetics Ph.D. program.

In April 2024, Kolstad was awarded the UW Genetics and Genomics Distinguished Research Fellowship. She is currently an undergraduate researcher in the School of Medicine & Public Health's Alisch Lab where she is conducting an independent research project to study depression as a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. She also mentors younger students in this lab. She previously worked in the Genetics Department's Werling Lab and served as a peer mentor to freshmen in her genetics and genomics major. She grades exams and weekly assignments for a neurogenetics course. Kolstad travelled to Tanzania in May 2024 as part of the UW Health, Education and Tanzanian Culture global health study abroad program. As a member of Badgers Volunteers, she was a team leader for Schools of Hope, a semester long program which tutored and mentored middle school students in the Madison area with intellectual disabilities, and a volunteer with the Community Development Authority's (CDA) Triangle Healthy Movement which works with elderly and disabled public housing residents. She has also participated in the Women in Scientific Education and Research (WISER) organization and Global Health Alliance.

Kolstad's advice to students considering a CALS program is: "Embrace the hands-on learning experience that CALS fosters; Follow where your learning leads you and let it reveal your passions; Explore a world of new knowledge and cultural perspectives; Seek mentorship from professors; and Engage with CALS Career Services to advance your goals."

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2025 Sprecher Award Recipients



Rianne Wagner

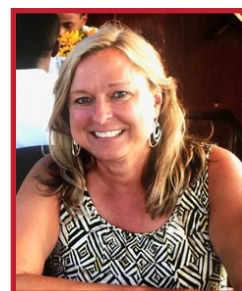
Rianne Wagner is an agronomy major from Wilmette, Ill., with certificates in organic agriculture and environmental soil science. She has maintained a 4.0 GPA while excelling as a collegiate athlete, student leader, and researcher. She plans to attend graduate school and then, she says, "I would like to help make the current conventional agriculture system more sustainable through either the breeding of new crop varieties or educating farmers on current agricultural research."

As president of the UW's Badger Crops Club, Wagner has boosted the club's fundraising and charity efforts through growing sweet corn and pumpkins at the Arlington Agriculture Research Station and then selling the harvests at farmers' markets, as well as donating produce to local food pantries. Wagner has been a member and captain of the UW crop judging team. She placed first individually at the 2024 SASES Crop Judging Contest and was on the 2024 winning team at the NCWSS Collegiate Weed Science Competition. She has excelled as a field research assistant in the UW's Soybean and Small Grains Lab or "CoolBean" lab. She has also gained experience as a garden apprentice at Wagner Farms, Glenview, Ill., and through her own landscaping services business. This past fall, she was selected to be a Golden Opportunity Scholar by the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America. Wagner is a rower on the UW women's lightweight rowing team where she has achieved great success winning a gold medal at the Head of the Charles Regatta in 2024. In recognition of her scholastic performance as a student athlete, she was named to the Academic All-Big Ten team in 2023 and 2024.

Despite having no experience in the agriculture field when she entered the UW, Wagner's registration in the Agronomy 100 class "hooked" her on agriculture and would be the start of her CALS journey as an agronomy major. As she says, "Through its strong student organizations and research opportunities, the CALS agronomy program has allowed me to flourish, both academically and professionally. If you're passionate about innovation, community and service, then a major within CALS is likely right for you!"

WALSAA awards \$10,000 to Senior Impact and Nancy J. Sprecher Enhancement Award recipients

This year, four seniors were recognized with Senior Impact Awards from WALSAA and three seniors received Nancy J. Sprecher Enhancement Awards. This marks the third year for the Sprecher awards given to CALS graduating seniors that have shown outstanding leadership and academic excellence. This exemplifies the qualities the late Nancy J. Sprecher displayed during her career. Sprecher's wish was to have a scholarship fund established at CALS to support Seniors post-graduation.



2025 WALSAA Senior Impact Award Recipients



2025 Sprecher Award Recipients

2025 Outstanding Sophomore Award Recipients



Brady Anderson

Brady Anderson is a genetics and genomics major from Buffalo, Minn., who is also pursuing a disability rights and services certificate. Five words that resonate with Anderson on the strengths of the CALS program are: curiosity, application, service, opportunity and catalyst; words that describe this first-generation college student's journey to find his identity. He feels his major offers him an incredible opportunity to

explore the genetic code and world-class laboratory opportunities.

Anderson is fundraising co-chair for the UW's Global Medical Brigades Chapter which raises money for pre-medical students to travel to Honduras to gain shadowing experience in international rural clinical settings. As a student leader for the UW's InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, he leads STEM students in Bible studies and helps with the chapter's outreach events. Anderson is currently an undergraduate researcher in the Dudley Lamming Laboratory in the School of Medicine and previously worked in a Botany Department laboratory. He is a general member of the UW Boxing Club and volunteers as an elementary afterschool classroom assistant at the Goodman Community Center.



Elizabeth Baudhuin

Elizabeth "Ellie" Baudhuin of Rochester, Minn., is a genetics and genomics major at the UW. She is also working towards a certificate in global health. Baudhuin participated in the 2023 CALS QuickStart program and continues to lend support to this valuable program. She is currently the professional development chair for the Women in Scientific Education and Research (WISER) and

social chair of the Undergraduate Genetics Association. She is on the University's Healthcare Advisory Committee and a member of Badger Volunteers. Baudhuin is in the Honors in Research program and works as an undergraduate researcher in the Department of Biochemistry's Hoskins Lab. Last summer, she was a patient care assistant at Mayo Clinic Hospital in her hometown.

Baudhuin says, "The CALS program continues to positively impact my life by fostering academic growth in an environment of leadership, curiosity, community, service, and integrity. I chose the UW because of the incredible opportunities my program offers in research." She feels communicating the importance of genetic discoveries is just as essential today as conducting and getting hands-on research experience.

WALSAA awards \$20,000 to Outstanding Sophomore Award recipients

Each year, WALSAA names 10 second-year CALS students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as outstanding sophomores. The award focuses on the qualities that truly exemplify an outstanding student, including leadership, service, experience, and academic success. Continue reading to learn more about this year's award winners and why they are truly outstanding.

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.

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2025 Outstanding Sophomore Award Recipients



Nathan Buckley

Nathan Buckley, from Lakeville, Minn., is majoring in biology and life sciences communication and is in the Honors in Research program. Buckley participated in the CALS QuickStart program in 2023 and returned as a QuickStart Undergraduate Teaching Fellow (UTF) last year where he was the lead UTF and proved to be an exceptional leader and role model for incoming first-year students. Buckley is a staff writer for the Journal of Undergraduate Science and Technology (JUST), a member of the Science Communication Club, and in 2024 received the John & Elizabeth Ross Science

Writing Scholarship. He presently works as an undergraduate researcher in the School of Medicine's Lamming Lab.

The words community, limitless, global, leadership and science describe Buckley's experience at CALS. Buckley has been a CALS Ambassador since 2023. He has presented information sessions, and been a representative at events, for the Life Sciences Communication Department, as well as serving on panels at CALS Board of Visitors events and collaborating with Dean Glenda Gillaspay to highlight CALS achievements.



Derek Gehin

Derek Gehin of Baraboo, Wis., is pursuing degrees in agronomy and agricultural business management. Gehin is presently Noble Ruler of the Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) fraternity. He is treasurer of the Badger Dairy Club and through this club has worked at World Dairy Expo for two years, the last as grounds chair. A member of the Badger Crops Club, he has competed in local, state, and national crops judging competitions and in 2024 was third high individual and member of the winning team at SESAS. He is a member of the Collegiate Farm Bureau, leads a campus bible study group, and

spearheads volunteer opportunities at Second Harvest Food Bank. Gehin has his own successful lawncare and landscaping business in Baraboo, has worked part-time on a dairy farm, and last summer was a sales/agronomy intern for Helena Agri-Enterprises.

Community, innovation, hard work, excellence and leadership define Gehin's feelings about CALS and his time as a Badger. More field training and precision agriculture curriculum he suggests could only enhance what is already a "top of the line" agronomy program.



Kelsey Hardy

Kelsey Hardy is a dairy science major from Dodgeville, Wis., also working towards a science communications certificate. For Hardy, the words motivation, service, sustainability, curiosity, and community aptly express her CALS journey to date. Hardy is secretary of the Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA) and previously served on their service committee. She is a member of Badger Dairy Club and Collegiate Farm Bureau. Hardy is a student representative on the Department of Animal & Dairy Sciences Extension and Outreach Committee and currently works in that department's Laporta Laboratory. As a member of the Wisconsin Junior Holstein Association,

Hardy is chair of their Junior Activities Committee, received the WHY Leadership Merit Award, and finished first in the senior division of the state's dairy jeopardy contest. Active in 4-H and FFA, she received a State FFA Degree in 2023. While in high school, Hardy was a valued veterinary/office assistant for Military Ridge Veterinary Service in Dodgeville. Last summer, she was an office intern for the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Services.

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Naureen Kamal

Naureen Kamal of Brookfield, Wis., is a genetics and genomics major also taking a certificate in health policy. She participates in CALS's Honors in Research program. Kamal is a member of the UW's Global Health Alliance and served as their co-forum coordinator. Her deep desire to help people with Alzheimer's Disease has led her to become a member and vice-president of the Advocates for Alzheimer's Club, an undergraduate researcher in the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center's Bendlin Lab, and a participant in the Wisconsin Alzheimer Institute's New Friends program where she is paired

with an individual with early-stage Alzheimer's to learn more about the disease. Kamal is a certified nursing assistant at the UW Health Trauma & Life Center and serves on the University's Healthcare Advisory Committee. She is a Tae Kwon Do instructor and previously did tutoring.

Kamal took part in the 2023 CALS QuickStart Program and returned in 2024 as a QuickStart Undergraduate Teaching Fellow (UTF). She is grateful to CALS for instilling in her a sense of community, exploration, curiosity, collaboration and empowerment.



Brianna Meyer

Brianna Meyer is a dairy science major from Chilton, Wis. She has a 4.0 GPA and has been accepted into the UW's Food Animal Veterinary Medical Scholars program which secures her early admission into the School of Veterinary Medicine. Meyer is a member of the Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA), Saddle & Sirloin, and UW dairy cattle judging team, and works in two Department of Animal & Dairy Sciences laboratories. She is the Badger Dairy Club's outreach co-chair and member of their Badger Invitational Sale selections committee. She is also on the Collegiate Farm

Bureau's planning committee. Meyer has served on the National Holstein Association's Junior Advisory Committee, the Wisconsin Holstein Junior Activities Committee, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection's Youth Council. She is currently president of the Wisconsin Junior Brown Swiss Association. She previously worked as an intern at Siemers Holsteins and been a ballet instructor. For Meyer, the words research, resources, outreach, perspective and community identify the strengths of CALS, while filling her life with opportunity, learning, and growth.



Adaobi Nnamuchi

Adaobi Nnamuchi of Menomonee Falls, Wis., is a global health (Honors) major also taking certificates in health policy and leadership. She is a recipient of the prestigious PEOPLE (Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence) scholarship at the UW. Nnamuchi was a research assistant in the Wisconsin Institute for Medical Research's Oncology Unit and a freshman ambassador for the African Student Association. She is currently a research assistant in the Koenigs Incarceration and Mental Health Lab, work which aligns with her commitment and volunteer efforts

to provide equity in healthcare and support to underserved populations. She is active in AHANA MAPS, a multicultural association for pre-medical students. Nnamuchi is a certified nursing assistant at UW Health University Hospital and Grace Commons, and a re-entry health intern at Partners in Hope. She also leads after-school science clubs for elementary students as part of the Service to Youth STEM program. Nnamuchi highlights impact, empathy, interdisciplinary, empowerment and advocacy as the greatest values of CALS, noting "These values are foundational to my path and fuel my dedication to improving global health."

Continued on next page

2025 Outstanding Sophomore Award Recipients



**Our College,
Our Connection**

2025 Outstanding Sophomore Award Recipients



Musaab Tareen

Musaab Tareen, from Pewaukee, Wis., is pursuing degrees in genetics and genomics and global health, plus a certificate in data science. He describes the value of his CALS journey with the words interdisciplinary, innovative, international, inclusive and impactful. Tareen has been an undergraduate researcher in the Department of Biochemistry's Rienstra Lab since October 2023. He is the outreach intern with the UW Muslim Students' Association and serves as this organization's representative for the multicultural student centre and with university leadership. As scholarly activity chair with the

Islamic STEM Association he seeks to build bridges between science and religion, along with mentoring and organizing outreach programs for high school students. He is on the advocacy and awareness committee at Alpha Epsilon Delta, a pre-health honors society. Off campus, Tareen works as a certified nursing assistant in the pediatric intensive care unit at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and volunteers at Ronald McDonald House Charities in Madison. He has coached over 250 young players as an assistant tennis professional with the Wisconsin Athletic Club in Hartland.



Vedaa Vandavasi

Vedaa Vandavasi, from Maharashtra, India, is a biological systems engineering with honors major from India. Deeply committed to the environment and sustainability, she is also taking certificates in engineering for energy sustainability, environmental studies and leadership. Vandavasi is a science news reporter for The Badger Herald and a researcher and staff writer for the Journal of Undergraduate Science and Technology. She is a project member for the UW's Engineers for a Sustainable World organization. As a freshman living in a UW residence hall, she became a resident sustainability ambassador for the Office of Sustainability. Last summer, Vandavasi worked

as a research and development intern for CEAT Tyres in India. She is currently the lab manager for the UW's Mathematics Educational Learning and Development Lab and a student researcher with the UW's Holloway Group @ SAGE (Sustainability and the Global Environment). She also enjoys being part of a campus competitive Indian dance team. As Vandavasi reflects on her educational experience, she cites interconnectedness, global engagement, ecological storytelling, regenerative thinking and celebrating culture as the things she values most about her CALS program.

Congratulations to all of our 2025 Outstanding Sophomore Award recipients!

We are proud of all of our 2025 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 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.



Liv Abegglen

Liv Abegglen of Madison, Wis., combines the STEM and humanities fields as a genetics and genomics and English major. Abegglen has a passion for creative writing. She is secretary of the UW's Fiction Writers Association, a submission reader for The Madison Review (an undergraduate-led literary journal), writes short stories, and is currently writing her third novel. She is president of the UW's Super Smash Bros. Club. Abegglen has been a research assistant in the UW's Raman, Weichert, and Webb Labs. As a certified nursing assistant employee, she provides home care to area clients. She is a camp counselor and archery instructor at a small nature camp and continues to help with

the Science Olympiad program. Abegglen volunteers at a text-based mental health hotline, crochets items for charity, and volunteers with many other groups like Babies & Beyond, American Red Cross, and UW Health. As an aspiring scientist, Abegglen is grateful for the collaborative, cutting-edge, authentic, ambitious, and innovative strengths of the CALS program.



Brandon Boyd

Brandon Boyd is an agronomy and agricultural business management major from Watertown, Wis. He is also pursuing certificates in soil science and entrepreneurship. Boyd is currently vice-president of the Collegiate Farm Bureau, outreach officer of the Badger Crops Club, and a member of the Badger Quarter Scale Tractor Pulling Team. He has been a member of the Collegiate Crops Judging Team for two years and last November was on the first-place team at the SASES contest. Boyd is Vice Noble Ruler of Scholarship at his fraternity, Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR), and has taken on other roles there as house steward and mail clerk. He was an active 4-H and FFA member, recipient of the

FFA State and American degrees, and served on the Wisconsin Agriculture Youth Council. In addition to being a self-employed farmer since 2022, he still works on his family's and another area farm. For Boyd, it is CALS's innovation, community, leadership, tradition, and knowledge that resonate as its greatest strengths.

WALSAA awards \$1,500 to Rick & Peggy Daluge Recognition Award recipients

This year, two sophomores each received \$750 for Rick & Peggy Daluge Recognition Awards. This marks the second year for the Daluge awards given to sophomore students at CALS who demonstrate excellence in academics, leadership and service to the CALS community.



OUTSTANDING ADVISOR

Luck Recognized as 2025 Award Recipient



Brian Luck, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist

Dr. Brian Luck has been named as this year's WALSAA Outstanding Advisor Award recipient. Luck has served as an advisor to the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) Student Branch (2018-2024) and the UW-Madison ¼ Scale Tractor Pulling Team since 2014. He remains the primary faculty contact for the ASABE Student Branch's annual fundraiser, the lawnmower/snowblower clinic (LMC), where students service equipment for clients and is their primary source of income. From the start of each semester through the event, Luck attends weekly LMC meetings, providing guidance on logistics, training, and fundraising. He has also participated in organizing the 2020 Midwest Regional Rally for ASABE that was hosted at UW-Madison as well as serving as a faculty advisor for the 2025 Midwest Regional Rally where approximately 150 students are slated to attend from across midwestern universities.

While advising the ¼ Scale Tractor Team, Luck attends weekly meetings to provide guidance on fundraising, design, and time management in preparation for the June competition. He travels with the team to Peoria, Ill., where

he offers support on design strategies, rule compliance, and machine repairs. He also serves as the team chef, preparing meals for students, advisors, and guests during the competition.

Luck's dedication to the BSE Department is evident through his commitment to the student organizations. He adjusts to students' schedules, often meeting after hours, to ensure their success. His efforts have yielded tangible results: in 2023, the ASABE Student Branch was named Outstanding Chapter at the Midwest Regional Rally at Ohio State University, a peer-selected honor recognizing organizational excellence. Under his guidance, the ¼ Scale Tractor Team has risen from eighteenth to sixth place overall in recent years, with team aspirations to win the competition in 2025.

Luck's steadfast support and mentorship have significantly contributed to the high performance of BSE student organizations. His time, expertise, and unwavering dedication make him an exceptional recipient of the WALSAA Outstanding Advisor Award. Congratulations!

STUDENT IMPACT GRANT FEATURE

AWA Rally to Fight Hunger

The Association of Women in Agriculture is a service, professional and social organization that helps members prepare for a career in agriculture and agricultural related fields; to aid women in agriculture in achieving their goals, to improve communication among women in agriculture and for the general betterment of agriculture.

Rally to Fight Hunger is AWA's largest service event of the year. The first annual event took place in 2016 and this year marks the ninth anniversary. This event is hosted in partnership with Kids Against Hunger.

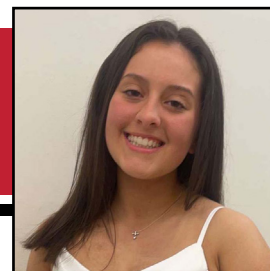


With the help of Alpha Gamma Rho members, 20,000 meals were packaged for rural communities in Honduras. Each meal includes high quality long grain rice, vitamin-fortified crushed soy, dehydrated vegetables, as well as vitamin and mineral powder.

For more information about WALSAA Student Impact Grants, visit: WALSAA.org/students/impact-grants/

CALS AMBASSADORS

Thank You!



Meghan Reimann, WALSA Student Representative

CALS Ambassadors,

Thank you so much for the extensive efforts you have made throughout this year. Your dedication to CALS does not go unnoticed and it is evident that students feel this warmth when they arrive onto campus. We have done a lot of work over the year, and each semester was filled with excitement and positive energy.



With all the successes we have had thus far, we look forward to seeing what else is in store for the college and the ambassadors. Keep up the great work!

Best regards,
Meghan Reimann

In the fall, we:

- Went to World Dairy Expo, with an indoor and outdoor booth supplying FFA T-shirts
- Hosted FFA and 4-H groups for campus tours
- Hosted WI Ag Science advisors and educators
- Hosted an open house where 300 guests attended



In the spring, we:

- Wrote letters to admitted students
- Hosted four admitted students events and one open house where 500 people were in attendance

Over the year, we:

- Hosted various high school visits
- Hosted weekly information sessions and tours
- Met with both prospective and admitted students along with their guests



2025 CALS AMBASSADORS

Jackson Banks, Omro, Wis. - Environmental Sciences and Educational Policy Studies
Nathan Buckley, Lakeville, Minn. - Biology and Life Sciences Communication (Pre-Med)
Alriana Buller-Jarrett, Bowie, Md. - Microbiology
Katie Cervenka, Delafield, Wis. - Life Sciences Communication and Wildlife Ecology
Patrick Colegrove, Chicago, Ill. - Biology
Alli Dawiedczyk, Lake Orion, Mich. - Global Health and Spanish (Pre-Law)
Gale Hakopian, West Bloomfield, Mich. - Microbiology, Entomology, and Global Health
Radhika Joshi, New Berlin, Wis. - Animal and Veterinary Biosciences
Molly Keebler, Middleton, Wis. - Genetics and Genomics and Life Sciences Communication
Maye MacLean, Presque Isle, Wis. - Food Science
Meghan Reimann, Buffalo, N.Y. - Animal and Veterinary Biosciences
Quinn Thomas, Millburn, N.J. - Biology (Pre-Vet)
Mackenzie Twomley, St. Louis, Mo. - Microbiology and Global Health
Olivia Uttech, Oconomowoc, Wis. - Dairy Science
Amal Vellani, Houston, Texas - Global Health and Health Promotion and Health Equity
Raagav Vijayalakshmi Siva, Coimbatore, India - Agricultural Business Management

SPOTLIGHT WALSAA MEMBERS

Giving Back to Student Organizations as Alumni

Ronna Morton-Ballmer and her daughters, Ciera Ballmer and Erica Ballmer-Riley, share the importance of becoming involved in CALS student organizations, both as students and giving back as alumni.

Tell us about yourself

Ciera: I graduated in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in dairy science and life sciences communication. Now, I get the pleasure of helping students learn about the farm to fork journey through Culinary Arts classes as I teach Family and Consumer Sciences at Parker High School in Janesville, Wis.

Erica: I received my bachelor's degree in dairy science and life sciences communication in 2016 with certificates in German and ag business management. Currently, I am the Senior Manager of Reputation + Influence at CLUTCH.

CLUTCH is a hybrid marketing communications consultancy-agency that serves clients in the agriculture and building materials industry. My primary focus is public relations, specifically media relations, securing earned media coverage for agriculture clients. My role includes content creation (web articles, emails, social media posts, etc.) for our clients as well.

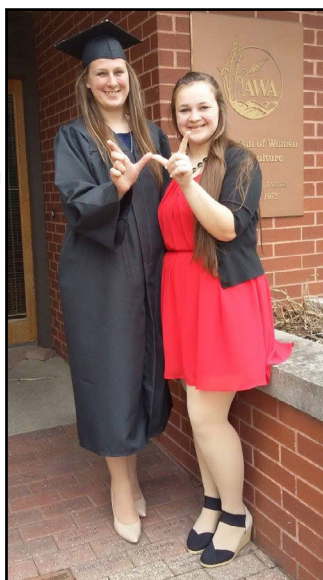
Ronna: I was a FISC graduate in 1976, attended CALS afterwards, then received my bachelor's degree from UW-Whitewater. I worked six years at Mullikin Grain in Janesville, 25 years with Tupperware (VIP Manager), and have been currently a substitute teacher for 17 years. I am also a registered fair judge.

What CALS student organizations were you involved in during college?

Ciera: Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA) – served as president, house manager and treasurer, National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA), Collegiate FFA – served as reporter, FIRE Conference chair, and CALSSA representative, and Collegiate Farm Bureau.

Erica: AWA – served as treasurer and communications coordinator, NAMA – served as secretary and CALSSA representative, Collegiate Farm Bureau, Collegiate FFA, and Badger Dairy Club.

Ronna: AWA, Badger Dairy Club, and Ag Campus Singers.



How have you given back to these organizations as an alum?

Ciera: I enjoy staying connected with the AWA to continue growing our network and opportunities for both students and alumni. I enjoy participating in a variety of AWA social events, serving as an alumni mentor, and volunteering with the AWA Education Committee.

Erica: Currently completing my second term as Secretary for the AWA Benefit Corporation (alumni organization), serve as a mentor to current students through the AWA Mentorship Program, alumni guest speaker – spoke to current AWA members about remote work and what it's like to work for an advertising agency, as well as regularly donate to the AWA Scholarship Fund and AWA House. Additionally, I currently serve on the National Student NAMA Committee to help plan and assist with the Student Marketing Competition at the annual Agri-Marketing Conference.

Ronna: I was honored to receive the AWA Founder's Award in 2025 and served as AWA Corp Board president in 1988. I have also donated to the AWA New House Fund (2 bricks), held numerous annual Tupperware fundraisers for AWA, donated tableware, dishes, storage items, household items for the house, and business attire to AWA's closet and created Badger quilts and accessories for AWA silent auctions. I'm a proud parent of two daughters who both lived at the AWA house (Fall 2012 - Spring 2019; seven consecutive years). Throughout the years, I've made treats for AWA open house events, helped with parking cars and football tailgates, attended alumni events including Thanksgiving dinners and Breakfast on the Farm at the Stock Pavilion.

What message would you like to give to current and potential students about becoming involved with student organizations?

Ciera: Dive deep into student organizations that interest you and say "Yes!" to as many opportunities that you can! I am really grateful for the unique experiences, friends and memories that I made through my involvement in CALS student organizations.

Continued on next page



Erica Ballmer-Riley, Ronna Morton-Ballmer, Ciera Ballmer

Continued from page 16

Erica: Student organizations help provide a place to belong on campus. They offer a great way to connect with other individuals with common goals and interests. Student organizations also provide excellent opportunities such as serving as an officer or chairing a committee that will allow you to gain practical skills and experience that can help prepare you for future careers. Some student organizations, like AWA or NAMA, also come with alumni or professional networks that provide advice and mentorship to help students prepare for their life post-graduation.

Ronna: Often, as a high school substitute teacher, I promote AWA to students and to FFA members (especially those I've judged at Leadership Development Events) who are headed to UW-Madison. I tell them that AWA is a professional organization and is the best way to connect with other young women with similar interests, rural roots, and a passion for agriculture. Furthermore, AWA can provide them with a network of resources and open doors to opportunities in the agriculture industry.

What was the biggest influence UW-Madison, CALS and/or WALSAA had on you?

Ciera: My CALS student organization involvement really strengthened my leadership and project management skills. I use these skills every day as an FCS teacher to teach my students, advise an FCCLA chapter, and manage many food labs. Leading the AWA membership and our officer team through an active year, helping plan a few AWA Breakfast on the Farm events as a tickets chair, and working collaboratively with fellow NAMA Marketing Team Students to create a cohesive marketing plan all helped me grow my project management skills, effectively follow through

on plans and help lead others toward success.

Erica: UW-Madison

and involvement in CALS student organizations helped build the foundation for my career. My CALS coursework gave me the foundational knowledge I needed to pursue a career in agricultural marketing communications. Student organizations like AWA and NAMA provided experiences that helped me prepare for my career. As AWA communications coordinator, I developed a monthly newsletter for alumni and maintained the website. Through NAMA, I learned how to conduct market research, create a marketing plan, and practice my public speaking skills through the Student Marketing Competition. CALS and AWA specifically provide a tremendous network that has helped me succeed. AWA Alumni often provided seminars to help us prepare for the real-world, such as dressing for success, proper dinner etiquette, and financial literacy. This network was also key in securing my first job out of school, thanks to a referral from a peer who attended UW-Madison and was an AWA member at the same time I was.

Ronna: I'm proud to be a Badger. Even though I never lived in an AWA house, I always have felt that I belonged and had a home away from home, whether it was to stop by before/after a Badger Football game, or attend an event, visit one of my daughters while they lived in the house, or admire the annual AWA picture on the Christmas card that came each year from the actives. I still keep in touch with many of my AWA friends, nearly five decades later.



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Creating Connections for 50 Years

Our College, Our Connection

Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorships offer exposure to and networking with UW-Madison's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) students, faculty, staff, alumni and industry enthusiasts. Your sponsorship offers you industry visibility and helps WALSAA support programs and activities that prepare the next generation for leadership.

In return, you receive our newsletters, inclusion on our website and promotion on our social media channels, plus an invitation to and recognition at our events.



WWW.WALSAA.ORG

Sponsorship Levels

Sponsorships give your industry visibility and help WALSAA support multiple programs and events. Please fill out the below information and send it with payment to: WALSAA, PO Box 5177, Madison, WI 53705-5177. For any questions, please contact Stephanie Hammerly at 608-438-1994 or email admin@walsaa.org.

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Sponsor logo on WALSAA.org and event signage, company mention in news releases, in the print and digital WALSAA Connection newsletter and on social media along with additional recognition at the event. Includes six event tickets.

Get Maximum Exposure -

Varsity level sponsors receive a ¼ page ad in one issue of the WALSAA Connection newsletter, which is sent quarterly to 5,600 WALSAA members and CALS leaders.

☐ **BADGER** Investment \$750-\$1,499

Sponsor logo on WALSAA.org and on event signage, company mention in news releases, in the WALSAA Connection newsletter and on social media along with additional recognition at the event. Includes four event tickets.

☐ **BABCOCK HALL** Investment \$500-\$749

Sponsor logo on event signage, in the WALSAA Connection newsletter and on social media along with additional recognition at the event. Includes two event tickets.

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Sponsor a silent auction item of your choosing. We will auction off your item during a WALSAA event to raise money towards future scholarships.



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Creating Connections for 50 Years

Our College, Our Connection

Annual Giving Opportunities

Support WALSAA through annual giving and planned gifts as this 501(c)(3) non-profit embarks on its remarkable journey to provide support to the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS). Over the years, WALSAA has connected students, faculty and alumni of CALS and impacted students and student organizations through:

- Award scholarships to sophomores that excel in academics, leadership and community service
- Recognize outstanding seniors that made an impact on and off campus during their collegiate career
- Support an outstanding advisor that supports and directs students during their time on campus
- Enhance student organizations and encourages their success with student impact grants
- Keep alumni connected to the campus, fellow alumni and college faculty and staff



WWW.WALSAA.ORG

Annual Giving Levels

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☐ **VARSITY** \$1,500 or greater

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What's New @CALS



**CONGRATULATIONS,
CLASS OF 2025!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2-5 ♦ CALS Welcome Week

September 20 ♦ WALSAA Football Fire-Up
UW Foundation, Madison



SAVE THE DATE!