

PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WALSAA Is Built on Connection



June Roush, WALSAA Past President

As my year as president of WALSAA concludes, I am reflecting on what this year has meant to our organization and to me personally. WALSAA is built on connection — linking students and alumni, honoring our past while cultivating our future. Over this past year, I watched those connections deepen and strengthen, and I am grateful for the shared commitment that makes our mission possible.

We also celebrated the breadth of the educational impact of CALS, including the health-related life sciences. One CALS biochemistry alumna shared how her academic foundation opened doors to a dynamic and impactful medical career. Her story reminded us that a CALS education prepares students to contribute meaningfully to fields that improve lives, strengthen communities, and advance human well-being.

This year, WALSAA also joined with CALS and WFAA leadership to reflect on shared priorities ahead — including increasing enrollment, student well-being, the development of the CALS Student Center, and the Wisconsin Rural Scholars Program. These conversations affirmed the important role WALSAA continues to play in fostering student support, learning experiences, and lifelong alumni engagement.

And of course, our flagship WALSAA Football Fire-Up brought our mission to life in a very real and joyful way. More than \$12,000 was raised to support scholarships, awards, and student activities, directly benefiting CALS students.

The day of Fire-Up, strong storms rolled into the early morning, and we found ourselves anxiously watching the radar. Fortunately, the skies cleared within an hour of our original start time. After the event, I was talking with Ayana Blair from WFAA, who shared that she had dreamed she was swimming

around the parking lot during Fire-Up. We burst out laughing, realizing we had carried the same blend of stress and optimism into the day.

Once the weather passed, the event came to life with good food, great company, and outstanding music from The Jimmys, whose energy and MC abilities helped set the tone for an unforgettable gathering.

As I transition into the role of past president, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation:

- To our WALSAA Board of Directors — thank you for your time and wisdom.
- To the CALS and WFAA teams — thank you for your partnership and shared commitment to student success.
- To our donors and members — thank you for believing in the work we do.
- And to our students — thank you for reminding us why WALSAA exists.

I am delighted to welcome Jane Hillstrom as the next president of WALSAA. Her dedication, leadership, and deep commitment to CALS students will serve this organization well. I look forward to supporting her in the year ahead.

Let's continue to stay engaged and let's continue to share the story of CALS — proudly, generously, and together.

On, Wisconsin!

June Meixelsperger Roush