

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Building for the Next 50 Years of WALSAA



Jane Hillstrom, WALSAA President

A few years ago, WALSAA celebrated 50 years of organizational growth. It's a big responsibility to carry WALSAA for the next 50 years. Priorities of the college have changed, students have changed — 70% of students in CALS are enrolled in life sciences vs. 30% in agriculture, a switch from when I was in school — and the way we connect with alumni has changed.

Your WALSAA board is enthusiastic about listening to your ideas to strengthen WALSAA. My partners on the executive team include Brian Koch (vice-president — meat and animal science), John Brunnquell (treasurer — agronomy B.S., poultry science M.S.) and June Roush (past president — agricultural economics). We are extremely appreciative of June's work over the past year in leading WALSAA. She handled details that set us up for more challenges. I'm excited to work with this team of alumni with a passion for the college.

How do we ensure a stable financial future for WALSAA? How do we build the Life Sciences connection? With 50,000 living CALS alumni, how do we engage alumni? How can we further engage students?

We've built a strong board and committee structure to address these questions. You'll hear more about these initiatives in future newsletters.

Let's begin with the first question. It's our end-of-year annual campaign and you'll find information on how to make a

difference in this newsletter. Think about how CALS impacted your life and how you might change another.

During my high school senior year, my sister — who worked at UW Financial Aid — called home to tell me a Financial Aid counselor reviewed my file. My status was poverty level which meant I would receive loans and grants to attend the UW. Alumni who provided scholarships, my work-study job, and financial aid allowed me to graduate from the UW. Somewhere in CALS, there's a student like me. That's why I give back to WALSAA and CALS.

Students at CALS apply for the FASFA, the federal financial aid form, at a 7% greater rate than the rest of the university. More than 31% of CALS students are eligible for a PEL grant, the federal program for undergraduate students based on exceptional financial need. Overall, the university rate is 26.5%. This means many CALS students are first generation students of low economic status.

Student life may be different now, but the need still exists. Please join me in giving back this holiday season by donating to WALSAA's annual campaign.