

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Change Is Inevitable



Jane Hillstrom, WALSAA President

During my career at a marketing agency, all team members were required to read *Disruption* by Jean-Marie Dru. While the book focused on marketing, its core idea — embracing new thinking to lead change rather than react to it — stayed with me. That concept has come to mind often as WALSAA navigates new systems, events, and evolving ways to serve the College, CALS faculty, students, and alumni.

One area experiencing change is our scholarship program. For many years, dedicated alumni have selected and interviewed hundreds of students for the Outstanding Sophomore and Senior Impact Awards, made possible by your generous support. Due to federal guidelines, all UW scholarships will now be part of the Pool & Match program to eliminate bias. WALSAA will continue to honor students with these scholarships. The Student Engagement Committee is planning an event to celebrate this year's recipients.

Change is also shaping our events. Many of us still reminisce about the years WALSAA held Fire-Up in the Stock Pavilion. Hundreds of alumni came to hear Bob Kaufmann's band play — we ate, told stories, and raised money for scholarships. In recent years, Fire-Up moved to the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association parking lot due to food safety requirements, but that space is no longer available. Our Events Committee has selected a new home for Fire-Up: The Orpheum Theater on State Street.

For those who set up chairs and tables in pouring rain last fall, this will be a welcome change. The Orpheum offers a nostalgic venue, nearby parking, walkable access for students, and freedom from weather concerns. Best of all, our dedicated volunteers — who have essentially built and dismantled a restaurant for a day — will finally be able to enjoy the food, music, and game on the big screen. This will be our 50th Fire-Up Tailgate Party! We hope you'll join us on October 24th when the Badgers play USC at Camp Randall.

Finally, we are adjusting our newsletter content and student engagement efforts to reflect the growth of life sciences within CALS. Under the leadership of Rick Daluge, WALSAA grew with alumni members in traditional agriculture fields such as dairy and poultry science. Today, more than 70% of CALS students are life sciences majors, such as genetics and biochemistry, which reflects today's needs for agriculture plus careers in health. In response, we have welcomed two new life sciences representatives to the WALSAA Board and plan to host a student focus group to better understand how we can support this growing community.

This year of disruption requires the board to think differently on how to make an impact for the College, faculty, students and alumni. We're up for the challenge. We hope you'll join us in leading change to carry WALSAA into the next 50 years.

On Wisconsin!