

## Grants Support CALS Student Organizations

WALSAA Student Activities Grants are available to CALS student organizations. Continuing the tradition of the innovation grants that began in 2012, Student Activities Grants focus on supporting student organization events and programs that will influence student life or the surrounding community.

WALSAA is proud to award these grants to several deserving student organizations each year and celebrate their successes.

UW-Madison's National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) team recently won top prize in NAMA's Student Marketing Competition. The championship-winning project centered on a soybean variety that produces a natural red dye based on a beet gene. This red dye, called EssentialRED, can replace the FDA-banned red dye #3 and other synthetic dyes.



***UW-Madison's National Agri-Marketing Association team wins 2026 National NAMA Championship***

Team members were Mark Arndt, Faith Baerwolf, Cate Cherney, Jonathan Chittick, Abby Cortichiato, Grace Holt, Lauren Breunig (leader), Sarah Kippes, Jenna Kudrna, Anna Martin, Brooke Mitchell, Emma Paulson, and Brian Styer.

The team, coached by Sarah Botham, teaching faculty in the Department of Life Sciences Communication, described a system in which a Wisconsin seed company offers soybean growers a premium to grow the soybean variety. The soybeans are then processed to extract EssentialRED, which is sold to food and beverage manufacturers looking for alternatives to synthetic red dyes. This work was based on research from CALS scientists, and the students were able to tour the Wisconsin Crop Innovation Center to learn more about the "red soybean."

NAMA provides a hands-on approach to marketing and communications in a way that many other organizations do not. Not only do members have the opportunity to participate in Marketing Team, they also build professional skills through resume workshops, study tours, working at World Dairy Expo, and Professional-NAMA events.

Applications for WALSAA Student Activities Grants are reviewed by the WALSAA Student Engagement Committee twice per year. Deadlines are March 1 and October 1.

***Learn more about WALSAA Student Activities Grants @ [WALSAA.org/students/grants/](https://walsaa.org/students/grants/)***



### **NEW MEMBER**

Anne-Marie Crowley, B.S. '88

### **IN MEMORIAM**

Jerold Apps, B.S.'55, M.S.'57, Ph.D.'67

### **CONTACT US**

Wisconsin Agricultural and Life Sciences Alumni Association  
PO Box 5177  
Madison, WI 53705-5177

P: 608.438.1994 E: [admin@walsaa.org](mailto:admin@walsaa.org)

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Excitement and Engagement



*Jane Hillstrom, WALSAA President*

Ten years ago while visiting colleges with my son, a professor at a small Wisconsin college stood in front of a classroom and said, "If you want to be an accountant, go to UW–Madison. But if you want to learn how to think, run a business, or speak in public, attend here." It took every bit of patience to not speak up. I didn't want to embarrass my son.

If I had, I would have told the professor that analyzing oxygen levels in Wisconsin lakes at the Limnology Lab or assisting graduate students on a reproductive biology project in the Biotron taught me to think; that I started and ran my own business; and I trained clients to speak in front of thousands of people.

I've never forgotten that moment because it reminds me what makes a CALS education so special. My CALS education taught me not only how to think and achieve, but also how to apply what I learned beyond the classroom. In many ways, it instilled in me the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea.

In the Member Feature on Lauren Brey, you'll read how her CALS education broadened her perspective and how, today, she encourages students to reach beyond their comfort zone. In the article by Kristina Vack, Director Career Services, you'll learn how new graduates moved from "fields to frontlines" but still apply a CALS way of thinking to solve interconnected problems that matter deeply to society.

At the May 9<sup>th</sup> CALS Commencement Reception, WALSAA board and committee members interacted with these new graduates, and the energy was electric. WALSAA provided complimentary red "UW CALS Alum" t-shirts. Proud parents and students shared excitement for what they'd accomplished and their next steps, and reminded us of that feeling of graduating and the excitement for what's to come.

Speaking of excitement, a quick reminder that registration is live on the website for WALSAA Football Fire-Up on October 24<sup>th</sup> at The Orpheum Theater. It's our 50<sup>th</sup> Fire-Up celebration with food, drink, music by The Jimmys, auctions, an appearance by Bucky, special VIP events, and a football game watch party. Registrations and sponsorships are limited so sign up soon.

For 150 years, CALS has been an investment with huge returns. Remind all who will listen that in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, you learn to think beyond the classroom.

The strength of WALSAA is reflected in the many activities and opportunities happening on and off campus for students, faculty, alumni, and the college. We're excited to keep you informed and involved.

On Wisconsin!

## WALSAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025-2026

Jane Hillstrom '80 - 2028  
President  
Dodgeville, Wis.

Brian Koch '90 - 2027  
Vice-President  
Waupun, Wis.

June Roush '87 - 2026  
Past President  
Middleton, Wis.

John Brunnquell '85, '95 - 2028  
Treasurer  
Port Washington, Wis.

Aaron Hoskins  
CALS Faculty Rep/Ex-Officio  
Madison, Wis.

Curt Lauderdale  
CALS Rep/Ex-Officio  
Madison, Wis.

CALS Ambassadors Student Rep  
Megan Reimann

CALS Student Reps  
Amanda Bender  
Derek Gehin

Mark Dopp '79 - 2028  
Augusta, Ga.

Derviş Gürsoy '19 - 2028  
Madison, Wis.

Jenny Loeb '01, '13 - 2028  
Madison, Wis.

Julie McKiernan '87 - 2027  
Dane, Wis.

Paul Mitchell '92 - 2026  
Madison, Wis.

Michael Murphy '87 - 2026  
DeWitt, Iowa

Cyndi Pitzner '90 - 2028  
Jefferson, Wis.

Tracy Propst '91 - 2027  
Beaver Dam, Wis.

Lindsey Sarbacker '21 - 2026  
Appleton, Wis.

Wynnie Zuchowski '92 - 2028  
Wales, Wis.

Rachel Zwiig FISC '08 - 2027  
Ixonia, Wis.

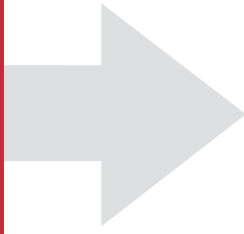
## RED JACKET AWARD NOMINATIONS

WALSAA is seeking nominations for the 2026 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. A nomination form is available at [WALSAA.org](http://WALSAA.org). Please send your nominations to WALSAA, PO Box 5177, Madison, WI 53705-5177, or email to [admin@walsaa.org](mailto:admin@walsaa.org) by July 1.



Creating Connections for 50 Years

# Our College, Our Connection



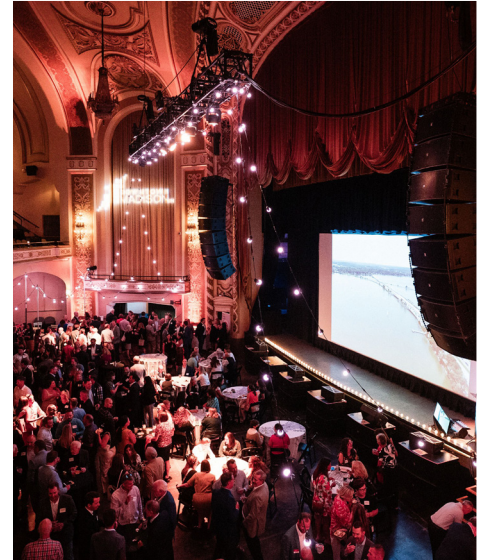
## 50<sup>th</sup> Fire-Up Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorships offer exposure to and networking with UW-Madison's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CAL S) students, faculty, staff, alumni, and industry enthusiasts. Your sponsorship not only provides industry visibility, but more importantly, it helps WALSAA support programs and activities that support alumni and prepare the next generation for leadership. You will also receive our newsletters, inclusion on our website, and promotion on our social media, plus an invitation to and recognition at our events.



[WWW.WALSAA.ORG](http://WWW.WALSAA.ORG)

- PRESENTING SPONSOR** Investment \$10,000 (1 available)  
Exclusive top-tier partnership with the highest level of visibility and hospitality. As the EXCLUSIVE PRESENTING SPONSOR, you will be recognized as the premier partner of the 50<sup>th</sup> WALSAA Football Fire-Up and associated with one of the event's most visible and memorable experiences. Includes a one-night hotel stay, 1 premium reserved table for 8, VIP Experience in the Apollo Lounge, Sponsor Lounge access, premium hosted bar, Orpheum State Street Marquee, on-stage logos, and more.
- LEGACY** Investment \$5,000 (3 available)  
Premium sponsorship featuring elevated hospitality and strong event recognition. As a LEGACY SPONSOR, you will be recognized as a premier partner of the 50<sup>th</sup> WALSAA Football Fire-Up and aligned with one of the event's most elevated hospitality experiences. Includes a one-night hotel stay, 1 premium reserved table for 8, VIP Experience in the Apollo Lounge, Sponsor Lounge access, premium hosted bar, and more.
- AMBASSADOR** Investment \$2,500  
As an AMBASSADOR SPONSOR, you will be recognized as a supporter of the 50<sup>th</sup> WALSAA Football Fire-Up. Includes 1 reserved table for 8, Sponsor Lounge access, hosted bar, logo on event banners, and more.
- VARSITY** Investment \$1,000  
As a VARSITY SPONSOR, you will be recognized as a valued supporter of the 50<sup>th</sup> WALSAA Football Fire-Up. Includes 4 seats at a reserved table, Sponsor Lounge access, hosted bar, and more.
- SILENT AUCTION CONTRIBUTION** Sponsor a silent auction item of your choosing. We will showcase your item in 50<sup>th</sup> WALSAA Football Fire-Up promotions. Proceeds towards WALSAA's mission to support CAL S students.



Value: \_\_\_\_\_ Item Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out the information requested and send with payment to:  
WALSAA, PO Box 5177, Madison, WI 53705-5177. Contact 608-438-1994 or email [admin@walsaa.org](mailto:admin@walsaa.org) with questions. Donate online using QR code >>



Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of how to be recognized: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



# CALS CAREERS

## From Fields to Frontlines: How CALS Careers Are Evolving



*Kristina Vack, CALS Director of Career Services*

CALS has long been defined by its deep connection to agriculture, food systems, and natural resources. Those roots remain strong. At the same time, the career paths of CALS graduates over the last 15 years tell an important story of growth and evolution—a story that increasingly includes healthcare and the life sciences.

Data from recent graduating classes show that healthcare has become the leading employment destination for CALS students, representing roughly 13–26% of graduates each year since 2016. Today’s alumni are physicians, physician assistants, veterinarians, nurses, registered dietitians, and scientists working at organizations such as UW Health, Mayo Clinic, Exact Sciences, and the Medical College of Wisconsin. Among CALS alumni overall, roughly 80% of top employers fall within the healthcare and health industry.

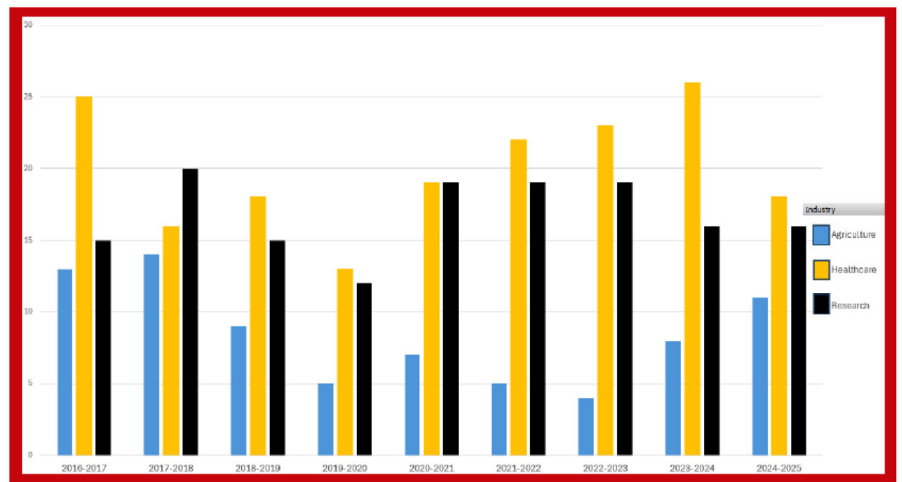
About one-third of CALS graduates report continuing directly into graduate or professional school, most commonly in medicine, veterinary medicine, nutrition, public health, dentistry, nursing, and related life science fields. Others enter clinical, research, or administrative healthcare roles as part of a gap-year plan that builds experience while keeping long-term graduate school goals in view.

This evolution reflects not a change in what CALS is, but where graduates are choosing to apply what they learn here. CALS has always encompassed both agricultural and life sciences, grounded in systems thinking, science-based decision-making, and a strong commitment to the public good. Today’s students are increasingly taking those same core competencies into healthcare and health-related fields—addressing complex challenges in human and animal health, biomedical research, nutrition, and public health. Whether graduates work in agriculture, healthcare, or research, they are applying a CALS way of thinking to solve interconnected problems that matter deeply to society.

CALS Career Services plays a critical role in helping students navigate this changing landscape. Students have access to one-on-one career advising, employer connections through networking events and on campus recruiting, as well as career development tools such as Handshake for jobs and internships,

BigInterview for interview preparation, and BigResume for resume feedback. Career Services also partners with employers and alumni to create experiential learning opportunities that connect classroom learning to real-world impact.

The growing presence of healthcare in CALS outcomes highlights how broadly a CALS degree can be applied—and how future generations are carrying forward the Wisconsin Idea in new and vital ways.



### Top Career Pathways for CALS Alumni

Healthcare and the health industry represent the dominant employment sector for CALS alumni. **80% of top alumni employers are in the Healthcare & Health Industry.**

Healthcare & Health Industry	Other Industries

# CALS MESSAGE



Support the  
CALS Fund

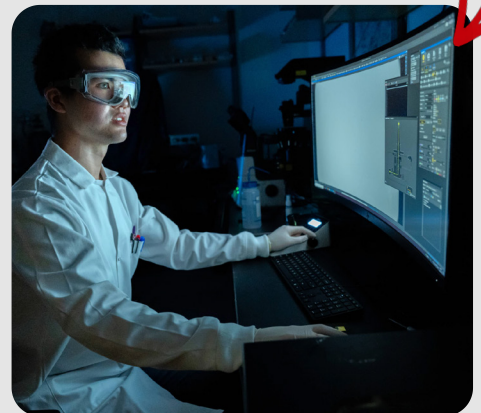


Gifts to the CALS Fund are used to directly invest in our students and faculty. When you give you make it possible for graduate and undergrad students, like Elliott and Lauren, to learn and engage in research experiences that make a difference.

## Waves of Curiosity

Elliott Weix BSx27 had a high school internship in biochemistry professor Scott Coyle's lab which ignited his passion for research. Now a 2025 Goldwater Scholar, Elliott made an unexpected observation of slow-moving waves in yeast cells. This may be the first step in creating tools to explore early stages of embryonic development.

Learn more about Elliott's research at [grow.cals.wisc.edu](https://grow.cals.wisc.edu).



## On the Farm and In the Lab

Lauren Jacobs BSx27 wasn't sure research was the right fit for her until she found Lautaro Rostoll Cangiano's lab studying how on-farm management affects calf gut and immune health at the Arlington Agricultural Research Station. *"We are able to do both hands-on research and benchwork. It's even better than I expected. I can go to the farm, get a blood sample, then isolate immune cells from the sample in the lab,"* says Lauren.

Read more about Lauren's research experience at <https://go.wisc.edu/1rd4bv>.

# WALSAA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Lauren Brey: WALSAA and CALS Connections Run Deep



Lauren Brey's parents brought her to WALSAA Fire-Up and Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA) events as a child, sparking a connection to UW–Madison that would last a lifetime. When it came time to select a college, Lauren chose UW–Madison because the energy felt familiar.

"The deciding factor in choosing the UW came during a campus tour coordinated by Food Science Professor Dr. Rich Hartel," Lauren said. "He arranged an ice cream-making workshop with graduate students just for me, going out of his way to highlight an area I was interested in pursuing."

A 2013 Life Sciences Communication and Food Science graduate, Lauren may not be making ice cream now, but she has remained connected to campus.

Dr. Hartel regularly invites her back to speak to his Discovering Food Science 201 class about the many paths available to food science students.

"I encourage students to be present. It's so important to not just show up physically but to pay attention and talk with

others. You never know who you are going to meet and what connections they have. I tell the students to spread their wings and try new things."

She credits her mother with introducing her to the power of networking by bringing her to campus events surrounded by

accomplished collegiate women. Lauren often finds herself the youngest person in the room at industry events, but she has learned how valuable it is to build relationships and confidently introduce herself in professional circles.

Lauren works for the Voice of Milk, a collaboration of Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, the Dairy Business Association, Minnesota Milk Producers Association, and Farmers for Sustainable Food. As Chief Experience Officer, she focuses on how to support farmers, corporate members, and sponsors while also improving the organization's internal processes and experience.

Her leadership roots trace back to her time in CALS. As a student she participated in WALSAA and CALS workshops on resume building, professional development, and networking. She helped found the Ag Day on Campus event where she stood on Bascom Hill and the campus mall sharing information about agriculture with fellow students. Her leadership

abilities contributed to Lauren receiving a 2011 WALSAA Outstanding Sophomore Scholarship.

"The scholarship allowed me to focus more on being a student and the experiences it offers rather than needing to have a part-time job. There are numerous companies that sponsor scholarships but receiving one from WALSAA, I felt recognized and supported by alumni. The interview process gave me

exposure to influential alumni, as well."

Lauren believes her CALS experience broadened her perspective and gave her the communication skills to thrive in business. Her coursework in a science major plus LSC provided her with the background and the tools to communicate and solve problems in the business world. "I am open-minded to new perspectives because of what I learned in college."

Lauren comes from a long line of UW graduates beginning with her grandfather, Lloyd Holterman who was a FISC graduate, her parents Daphne and Lloyd Holterman, her sister Taylor, and multiple aunts, uncles, and cousins — sixteen, in all, not counting her husband Jacob's family which adds another twelve proud Badgers.

Lauren and Jacob, along with Jacob's brother, Tony, and his wife, Moriah, run Brey Cycle Farm, a registered Holstein dairy farm in northeast Wisconsin, and market their own beef through Brey Family Beef. Lauren and Jacob are raising three young children, ages one to five.

Looking ahead, Lauren hopes to one day bring her children to campus and share with them the same sense of possibility and connection she found at CALS.

**"The scholarship allowed me to focus more on being a student and the experiences it offers rather than needing to have a part-time job. There are numerous companies that sponsor scholarships, but receiving one from WALSAA, I felt recognized and supported by alumni. The interview process gave me exposure to influential alumni, as well."**



**Lauren & Jacob Brey  
with their family**

# DEPARTMENT SNAPSHOTS

## Recent News and Advances



READ MORE

### Animal and Dairy Science

#### Professional Dairy Producers (PDP): Record High Year for Mentor Program with Many UW–Madison Students Involved

Brooklyn Schwoerer, a junior studying Dairy Science, said, “The PDP mentorship program allowed me to connect with a producer within the dairy industry who was so close to my home. JTP Farms gave me insight into how technology can be incorporated into the dairy industry through their robotic milking and feeding systems.”



### Biochemistry

#### Mapping Folate Distribution in Mice Reveals Insights into Gut Microbiota

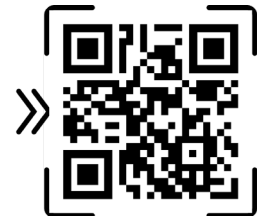
A recent study from the Chaudhari Lab in the UW–Madison Department of Biochemistry explores the relationship between gut-dwelling bacteria and folate, a vitamin that is critical for health and metabolism. “Folate is important for essential functions in our body, like constructing the backbones of our DNA and RNA, and synthesizing amino acids needed to make proteins,” says Snehal Chaudhari (*left*). “We get folate primarily through foods like dark leafy greens, but it’s not well understood if the gut microbiome produces folate to contribute to what our body needs.”



### Entomology

#### Claire Schloemer Part of Team Awarded Western Extension Directors Association (WEDA) Excellence in Extension Programming Award

A team of researchers from Auburn University and University of Hawaii at Manoa, including Claire Schloemer (Ph.D. student, Groves Lab), were awarded the 2026 Western Extension Directors Association Award for Excellence in Extension Programming-Team for their work on the Organic Sweet Potato IPM and Soil Health Management for Small- and Mid-Size Farms project funded by the Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) program through USDA NIFA.



### Genetics

#### Browning Designated 2026 Genetics Outstanding Senior of the Year

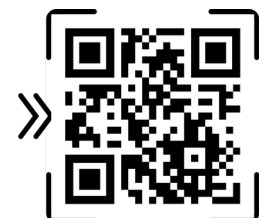
The Laboratory of Genetics is thrilled to announce Evelyn Browning as the recipient of the 2026 Outstanding Senior Award, an award dedicated to recognizing exceptional achievement in academics, research, and service! Evelyn was chosen out of many qualified nominees, and showcases the best of what a UW Genetics student has to offer.



### Life Sciences Communication

#### First a Student, Now a Teacher: LSC Welcomes Back Program Alum, Kelly Mella

As a student, Mella was initially pre-med at UW-Madison. During one fateful trip to her advisor’s office, however, she saw an intriguing sign on the building next door. The sign read, “Agricultural Journalism,” (now LSC) and it turned out to be where Mella would find her new passion. After completing her bachelor’s degree in LSC and then pursuing a master’s as well, Mella’s experience as a Teaching Assistant for LSC100 would lead her to realize that she also loved teaching.





Your CALS Connection For Life

P.O. Box 5177, Madison, WI 53705-5177

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MADISON WI  
PERMIT NO. 549

Follow WALSAA on social media at:



Facebook.com/WALSAAUW



LinkedIn.com/company/WALSAA



Instagram.com/WALSAAUW

WALSAA.org

Field Days @CALS



Join us at our Agricultural Research Stations for Field Days! Learn about the research projects at the stations from CALS faculty and researchers. Explore the full schedule of events at [cals.wisc.edu/fielddays](https://cals.wisc.edu/fielddays).



50TH WALSAA FOOTBALL FIRE-UP - SAVE THE DATE



REGISTER NOW



WALSAA.ORG