

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 9th 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 24th at The Orpheum Theater. It’s our 50th 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!