NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES DIGEST

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Spring Semester 2026

Nutritional Sciences

Our mission is to generate and disseminate knowledge regarding diet and nutrition to improve the health and economic development of current and future generations and to foster an educated society. We do this through our combined efforts in undergraduate and graduate education, research, and extension.

Nutritional Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

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WWW.NUTRISCI.WISC.EDU

to learn more about our department

From the Chair
Scott Rankin, PhD

Dear Nutritional Sciences Colleagues, Alumni, and Friends,

As another academic year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on both the pace of change and the opportunities that have emerged for our department. Like many areas of higher education, we continue to navigate financial pressures, evolving student interests, and a shifting research landscape. These realities are not trivial, but they have also sharpened our focus on where we can have the greatest impact.

One area where this focus is especially clear is our growing engagement in the Food is Medicine space. Our faculty are playing leadership roles in this campus-wide effort, helping to define how food, nutrition, and health intersect in meaningful, translational ways. This work aligns naturally with our long-standing strengths, but it also pushes us to think more broadly across disciplines, campus, and in partnership with external stakeholders. It is an area where we are not only participating, but helping to lead, refine and support.

At the same time, we are approaching an important milestone in the evolution of our academic unit. On July 1, 2026, the Departments of Nutritional Sciences and Food Science will formally merge to create a new Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences. This step reflects more than administrative restructuring but rather a deliberate effort to bring together complementary expertise spanning food production, processing, and human health. The merged department is designed to better address challenges at the intersection of food, nutrition, sustainability, and health, while creating new opportunities for students, research collaborations, and external engagement .

This transition has been the result of extensive planning, faculty and staff input, and thoughtful discussion over the past two years. While there is still work ahead as we

From the Chair
Scott Rankin, PhD

finalize preparations, I am encouraged by the shared commitment to building a department that is both academically strong and forward-looking.

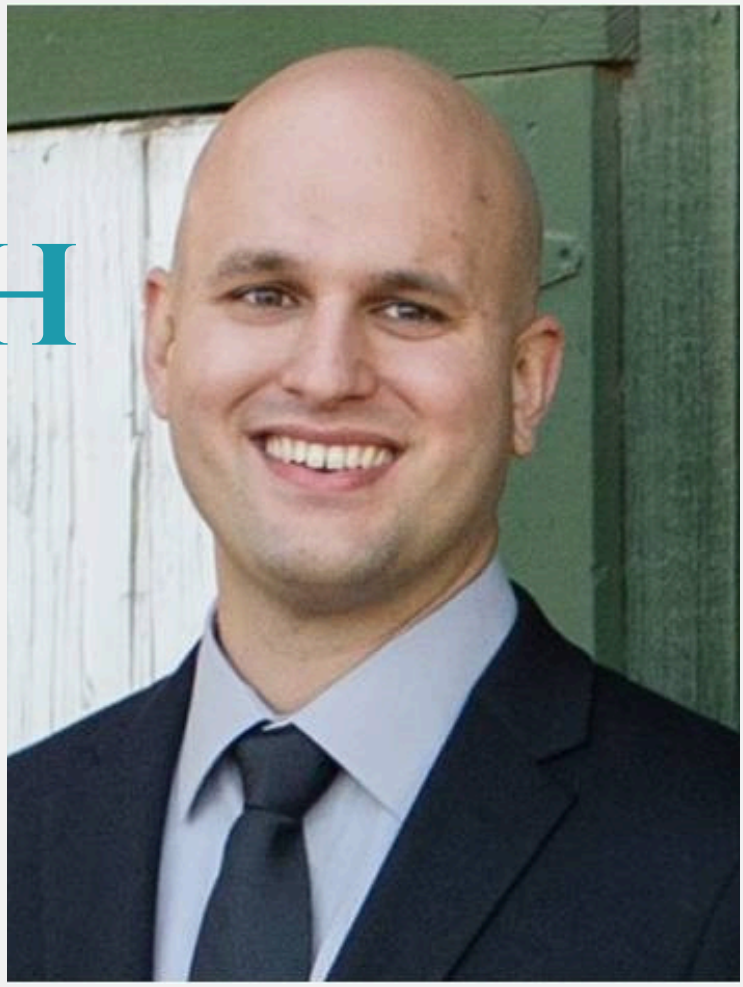
Amid these changes, what remains constant is the quality and dedication of our people. Faculty and staff continue to advance impactful research, lead thoughtfully designed curricula, and otherwise sustain the daily operations that make our work possible. Students bring energy, curiosity, and purpose to our programs. These are the foundations that allow us to move forward with confidence, even in uncertain times.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and engagement with our department. I am optimistic about where we are headed and look forward to sharing more as these efforts continue to take shape.

Warm regards,

Scott Rankin
Chair, Department of Nutritional Sciences

PARKS & RESEARCH



Brian Parks, PhD. Associate Professor of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Dr. Brian Parks joined the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 2015 and was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in Fall 2025.

His laboratory, currently composed of PhD candidate Beth Poad and several undergraduate researchers, investigates the intersection of genetics, physiology, and biochemistry.

Reflecting on this milestone and the lab's future direction, Dr. Parks noted, "We're at a point where the questions we can now ask are far more exciting than the ones we started with."

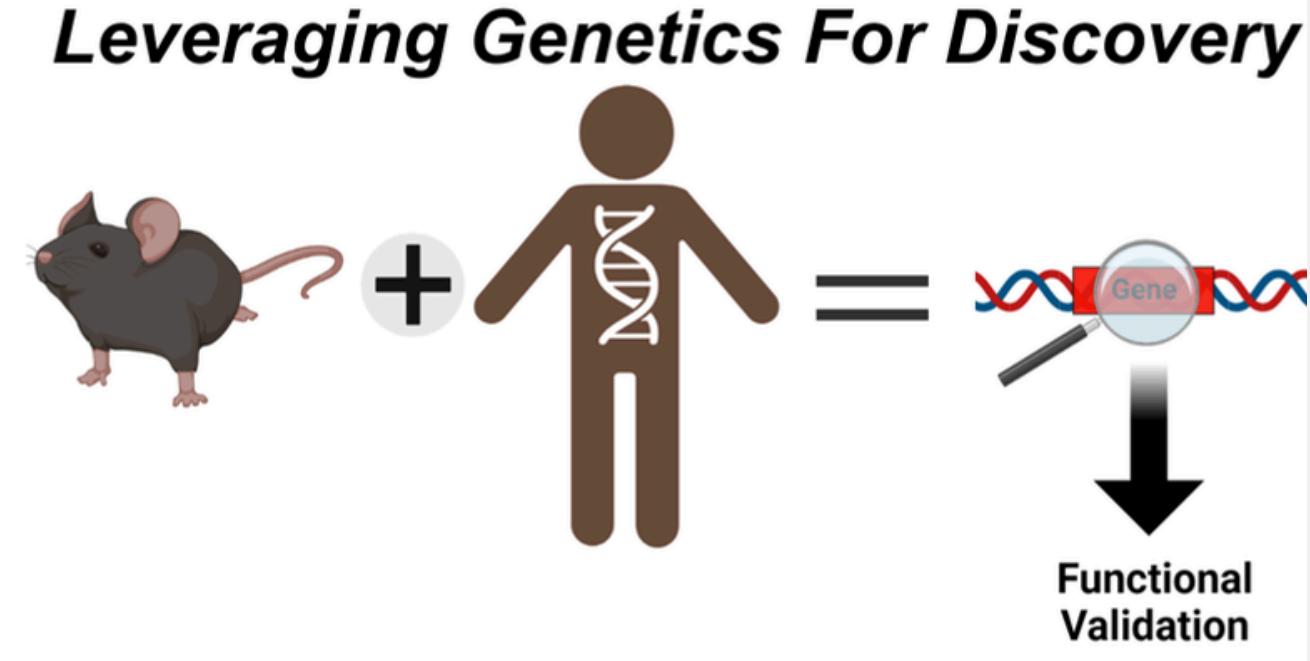
In addition to teaching NS510, NS618, and NS901, he serves on the college's Research Advisory Committee and Scholastic Policies and Actions Committee, as well as the department's Vivarium Management Committee, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the Nutrition and Metabolism Executive Committee.

Originally from Fredericksburg, Virginia, Brian completed parts of his training in Birmingham, Alabama, and Los Angeles, California. One of his favorite aspects of living in Madison, Wisconsin, is the ability to waterski in the summer and snowboard in the winter.

PARKS LAB

The Parks Lab investigates how genetics and diet interact to influence common metabolic diseases, including dyslipidemia, obesity, and diabetes. Current projects aim to identify the genetic determinants of variation in blood cholesterol across human populations and to define the role of vitamin B12 in adipocyte biology. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the lab seeks to uncover and characterize novel drivers of metabolic disease that may ultimately be leveraged for therapeutic benefit.

Learn more about Parks Lab research here.



Above - Schematic representation of the Parks Lab approach combining mouse and human genetics to identify genetic determinants of disease.

SHERRY TANUMIHARDJO

American Society for Nutrition (ASN) and its Foundation selected Dr. Sherry Tanumihardjo to be a member of the ASN Class of 2026 Distinguished Fellows.

To be inducted as a Distinguished Fellow of ASN is the highest honor the Society bestows. This recognition program has been elevated to recognize and pay tribute to the lifetime achievements of outstanding scientists who have had distinguished careers in the field of nutrition.

The Distinguished Fellow of the American Society for Nutrition (DFASN) program was established in 1952 as the highest honor that the Society bestows for notable lifetime achievements. **To date, the program has recognized more than 500 scientists who have had distinguished careers in the field of nutrition**. Applicants must be scientists who have had a distinguished career in the field of nutrition and be at least thirty years of membership with ASN and from completion of their terminal degree.

ASN Class of 2026 Distinguished Fellows

Dr. Tanumihardjo is a Professor of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research interests are Vitamin A status assessment and Provitamin A carotenoids as sources of Vitamin A, as well as vegetable and fruit intake to enhance health; Global Health.

Sherry will be recognized during the NUTRITION 2026 annual meeting in National Harbor, MD, just outside of Washington DC, July 25 – July 28, 2026.

JOE PIERRE

Dr. Joseph Pierre received a $3,091,360 grant from the National Institutes of Health to study Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) and milk derived extracellular vesicles.

"Parenteral nutrition is lifesaving but is associated with high rates of hepatic complications in children and babies that is characterized by cholestasis, steatosis, fibrosis, and eventual organ failure. Our recent research has been focused on establishing a working model of pediatric parenteral nutrition for the first time and elucidating mechanisms underpinning the development of cholestasis and steatosis and identify therapies. This proposal will yield significant insights into the contributions of the intestinal, gut microbiome, myeloid immune response, and hepatic metabolic adaptation in pediatric mice following parenteral nutrition and therapeutic intervention."

The study titled, “Pediatric Total Parenteral Nutrition and Extracellular Vesicle Utility in Gut-Liver Axis Dysfunction ,” will take place over four years.

Dr. Pierre is an Assistant Professor of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research interests are a range of basic, translational, and clinical research questions focused on the gastrointestinal microbiome, nutrition, and gut physiology and disease. Our experimental models include bariatric surgery, parenteral and enteral nutrition, gnotobiotics, and organoid approaches.

“We perform microbiome community computational analysis and culturing techniques to investigate host-microbial interactions. From a nutrition standpoint, we are interested in the role of dairy products in supporting human health and nutrition and discovering novel uses for dairy components in the treatment of disease.”

NUTRISCI BY THE NUMBERS

Department of Nutritional Sciences

The Department of Nutritional Sciences has a large global presence spanning multiple countries and states. In addition, over 1,000 undergraduate students from other majors take our courses yearly to fulfill their degree requirements and gain valuable experience in our labs.

NUMBER OF ALUMNI **3,137**
Both undergaduate and graduate

STATES ALUMNI LIVE IN **49**
49 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

COUNTRIES ALUMNI LIVE IN **15**
Number of military bases - 2

NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS **231**
Nutri Sci/ALS degree option - 80
Dietetics/ADI degree option - 151

NUMBER OF N&M GRADUATE STUDENTS **24**
Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition Students - 79

NUMBER OF UWFAA FUNDS **32**
Make a donation today!

BLENDING NUTRITION INTO THE MD CURRICULUM

BY MARY ELLEN GABRIEL

Nutrition is critical to human thriving, helping to prevent disease, support healing, and improve long-term health. At the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, medical students learn how evidence-based nutrition can shape patient care across every specialty. What we eat and drink has a profound impact on our health. Research has linked diets high in excess calories, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars to the development or worsening of conditions such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. A well-balanced diet has been shown to lower disease risk and extend healthspan; the number of years spent free from chronic disease and disability. Doctors who understand not only the biochemistry of nutrition, but also the social factors that can determine a patient's nutritional status, are better prepared to provide care and improve patient outcomes.

Since 2016, the UW School of Medicine and Public Health's innovative MD ForWard Curriculum has provided medical students with more than 65 hours of nutrition education. It has also planned and taught in partnership with medical educators and scientists, as well as registered dietitian nutritionists from the Department of Nutritional Sciences in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. In keeping with the school's mission as the nation's first school of medicine and public health, instructors address nutrition not only within the doctor-patient relationship but also within the context of public health.

Shobhina Chheda

Tara LaRowe

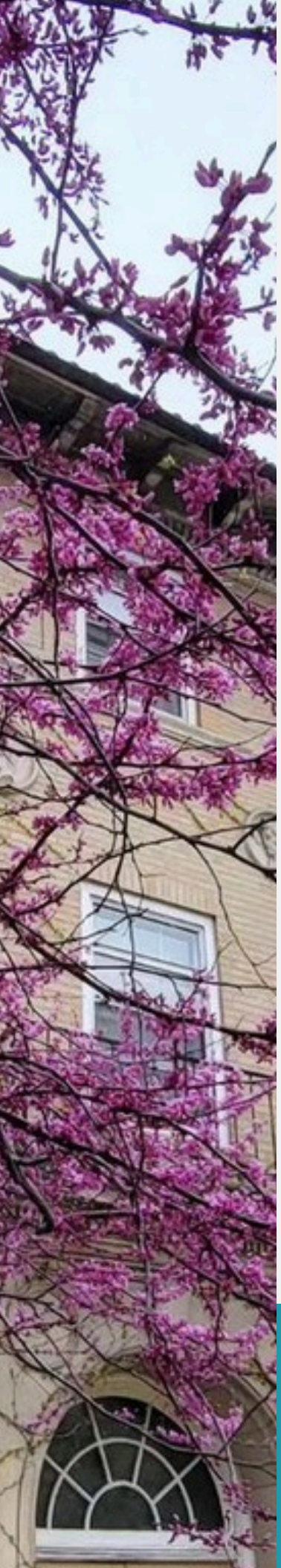
A staple of the curriculum

Nutrition education begins in a first-year course called Food, Fasting, and Fitness, where medical students are introduced to foundational concepts related to nutritional biochemistry (including basic metabolism), the essential roles of macro- and micronutrients in the body, and an overview of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Within the same course, lecturers cover a range of topics that provide context, from nutrition's role in disease prevention and management to issues of access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food for individuals and populations. The integrated curriculum ensures that students can revisit core concepts as they progress from preclinical blocks to clinical blocks with disciplines such as obstetrics, gynecology and pediatrics, family medicine, and surgery.

"We don't have a course called 'Nutrition,' where students learn the basics and move on, never to discuss them again," said Dr. Shobhina Chheda, Associate Dean for medical education. "The ForWard Curriculum allows students to encounter concepts in spaced repetition, through case studies, clinical experiences and subsequent courses."
Throughout their learning, Chheda said, students consider questions such as: How can my patient get access to healthy food in their community? What are evidence-based recommendations for newborns and breastfeeding? What are the risks of introducing nutrition after fasting due to illness?

Keeping learning dynamic and fresh

Tara LaRowe, PhD, RDN, is one of three registered dietitian nutritionists who help faculty physicians plan and teach the nutrition component of the ForWard Curriculum. An assistant teaching professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, LaRowe is an experienced instructor who has also worked as a clinical nutritionist at UW Health's Preventive Cardiology Clinic and an assistant scientist in the Department of Family Medicine. She views the collaboration between nutrition sciences and medical education as beneficial for both sides. Not only do medical students receive expert, up-to-date instruction on nutrition, but they also learn that dietitians can be partners in disease prevention and treatment.



“The more opportunities we have to interact with soon-to-be physicians, the more they see the value of RDNs as members of their interdisciplinary teams,” said LaRowe, who earned her doctorate in Nutritional Sciences at UW–Madison. “Dietitians can partner with doctors on nutrition counseling, medical nutrition therapy, and more.”

Nutrition is a complex field, and research is constantly providing more insights, requiring dietitians, physicians, and health leaders to revise evidence-based approaches. Fad diets are an example of a new topic now under discussion, according to LaRowe.

“We talk about the implications of fad diets, which may aid with weight loss in the short term but do not meet all nutrient needs and are not sustainable,” she said. “Another topic I am expecting to cover in the coming years is GLP-1 medications, which are drugs that are wonderful tools for weight loss but can also cause nutrient deficiencies if not monitored by physicians and dieticians.”

Case-based learning is a hallmark of the ForWard Curriculum. In 2023, the learning team redesigned the curriculum’s nutrition-based cases to emphasize cardiovascular disease prevention, malnutrition, and pediatric micronutrient deficiencies. Each case is based on real patient situations (with all identifying details removed) and discussion is led by a faculty member with expertise in the area being discussed.
LaRowe said case-based learning, in which small groups of students work together to solve a problem and generate a patient treatment plan, helps solidify concepts.

“Students appreciate that these are drawn from what is seen in clinic,” LaRowe said. “It makes them feel like what they are learning is relevant, which makes them excited to learn more.”

Chheda, who earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nutritional biochemistry before becoming a doctor, has seen the evidence of what is known and accepted about nutrition change over the last thirty years. She emphasized the importance of teaching students not only the latest information, but ways to stay current long after they leave medical school.

“We want our students to graduate with a drive to keep learning,” said Chheda. “It’s not about drawing forever on what they learned here. We are not teaching them to be experts in nutrition – we are teaching them to be expert doctors, which is about knowing how to access the best evidence and incorporate that into the care of patients, as well as how to access public health resources and work with trained dietitians.”

“WE ARE NOT TEACHING THEM TO BE EXPERTS IN NUTRITION – WE ARE TEACHING THEM TO BE EXPERT DOCTORS, WHICH IS ABOUT KNOWING HOW TO ACCESS THE BEST EVIDENCE AND INCORPORATE THAT INTO THE CARE OF PATIENTS.”

SHOBHINA CHHEDA, MD, MPH

Nutritional Sciences Library

Did you know?

Located on the fourth floor of the Nutritional Sciences Building is a collection of hundreds of thesis' and dissertations?

From 1968 to 2026, this collection holds the works of our amazing alumni as they obtained their masters or doctorate degrees. Do you recognize yours?

4 PLUS 1

New Addition to the Dietetics Program

A Faster Route to Advanced Training in Clinical Nutrition

The Accelerated (4+1) Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition (MSCN) Pathway offers motivated UW–Madison undergraduate students the opportunity to complete both the B.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics and the MSCN degree in as little as five years—saving time, reducing tuition, and providing a clearer path toward advanced nutrition practice as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). “With recent limits on graduate loan options, reducing tuition has never been more important. The Accelerated (4+1) Pathway helps students save meaningful graduate costs, making the RDN route more financially attainable.” — Makayla Schuchardt, MSCN Program Coordinator

Four + One

How does it work?

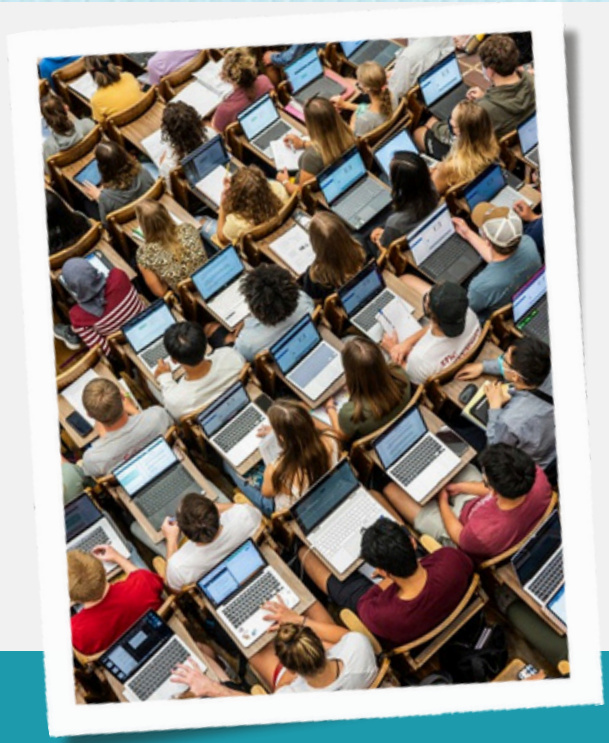
How the Pathway Works

Starting in Fall 2026, students with strong academic standing in the B.S. Nutrition and Dietetics undergraduate program may choose to participate in the Accelerated MSCN Pathway and can take up to seven (7) credits of approved MSCN graduate courses during their final undergraduate year.

These credits count toward both degrees, reducing the graduate credit requirement from 30 to 23 credits and allowing students to complete the MSCN within 12 months after earning their bachelor's degree.

Approved Graduate Courses Include:

- Nutri Sci 621: Introduction to Nutrition Epidemiology
- Nutri Sci 652: Advanced Nutrition Counseling and Education
- Nutri Sci 660: Human Energy Metabolism
- Nutri Sci 661: Micronutrients: Human Physiology and Disease
- Nutri Sci 662: Advanced Community Nutrition
- Nutri Sci 663: Sports Nutrition
- Nutri Sci 675: Nutraceuticals for Health Professionals



GPA REQUIREMENTS

Students must hold a minimum 3.0 GPA when applying to ADI status and when transitioning into the graduate program.

APPLICATION TIMING

STUDENTS EXPRESS INTEREST DURING THE PRE-DIETETICS → ADI APPLICATION PROCESS.

- FALL ADMISSION DEADLINE: JULY 5
- SPRING ADMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 5

Graduate School Admission

Students apply to the MSCN in their final undergraduate semester. Those meeting GPA requirements receive an automatic program recommendation with a streamlined review process.

Cost Savings & Financial Benefits

The MSCN program currently requires 30 credits at $900 per credit, totaling $27,000. Accelerated Pathway students can transfer up to 7 credits, reducing their cost to $20,700—a savings of up to $6,300.

Partnership Programs Include

- UW Health Integrated Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics
- Mayo Clinic - Rochester Dietetic Internship
- Virginia Commonwealth Dietetic Internship
- Minneapolis VA Dietetic Internship
- Aramark Dietetic Internship

Why This Pathway Matters

- The newly approved Accelerated (4+1) MSCN Pathway supports students who want to:
    - enter professional practice faster
    - reduce degree-completion time
    - save significantly on tuition
    - strengthen readiness for supervised practice and RDN credentialing
    - build stronger academic connections between undergraduate and graduate training
- This pathway reflects UW–Madison's ongoing commitment to developing a future-ready, expertly trained nutrition workforce.

Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL & LIFE SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Beginning July 1, 2026, the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences will cultivate a collaborative, interdisciplinary environment that empowers researchers, students, and partners to address larger societal challenges at the intersection of food and health.

Our new mission is to generate impactful science, prepare graduates for leadership in nutrition, food systems, and human performance, and translate scientific discoveries into real-world solutions that strengthen communities, support industry, and uphold the Wisconsin Idea.

Coming July 1, 2026 - WWW.FNS.WISC.EDU

FOOD SCIENCE-437

Food Science 437 was a new challenge for Tara Larowe, PhD and Nate Willis, PhD. Doctor Willis used his background as a chef and food service manager to gain a strong foundation of the course material. He and Tara started teaching this course when the previous instructor had an emergency, and they combined to write recipes and develop lab materials. While doing so, they had fun incorporating new skills and new foods into the lesson plan, allowing the students to create things that tasted great.

Meet the Instructors

> **“The more we understand about nutrition-related behaviors and diseases, the better we can care for each other and build a healthier society -Nate Willis”**

Nate received his BS in Hospitality Administration from Boston University and his PhD in Nutritional Sciences from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He is currently working on preclinical research projects that help push understanding of liver disease and modes of interorgan communication.

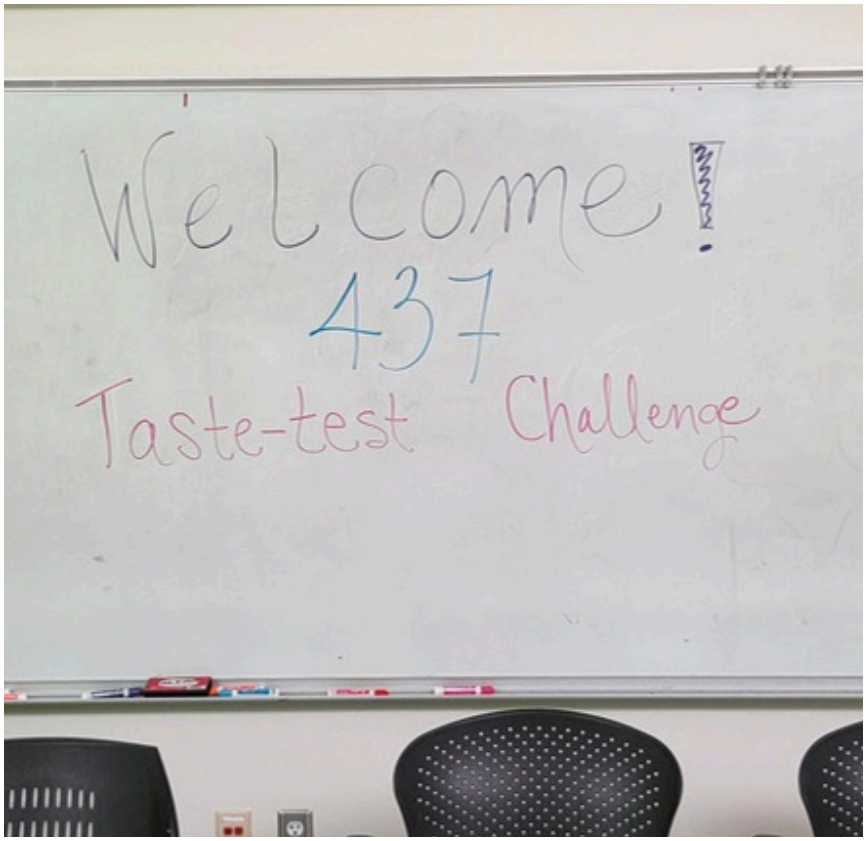
Dr. Willis believes that food and nutrition are ways to build individual agency and lifestyle skills that contribute to cultural expression, physical and mental health, and community. Nate enjoys reading and board games in the winter, and follows that up with hiking and gardening when the weather consents.

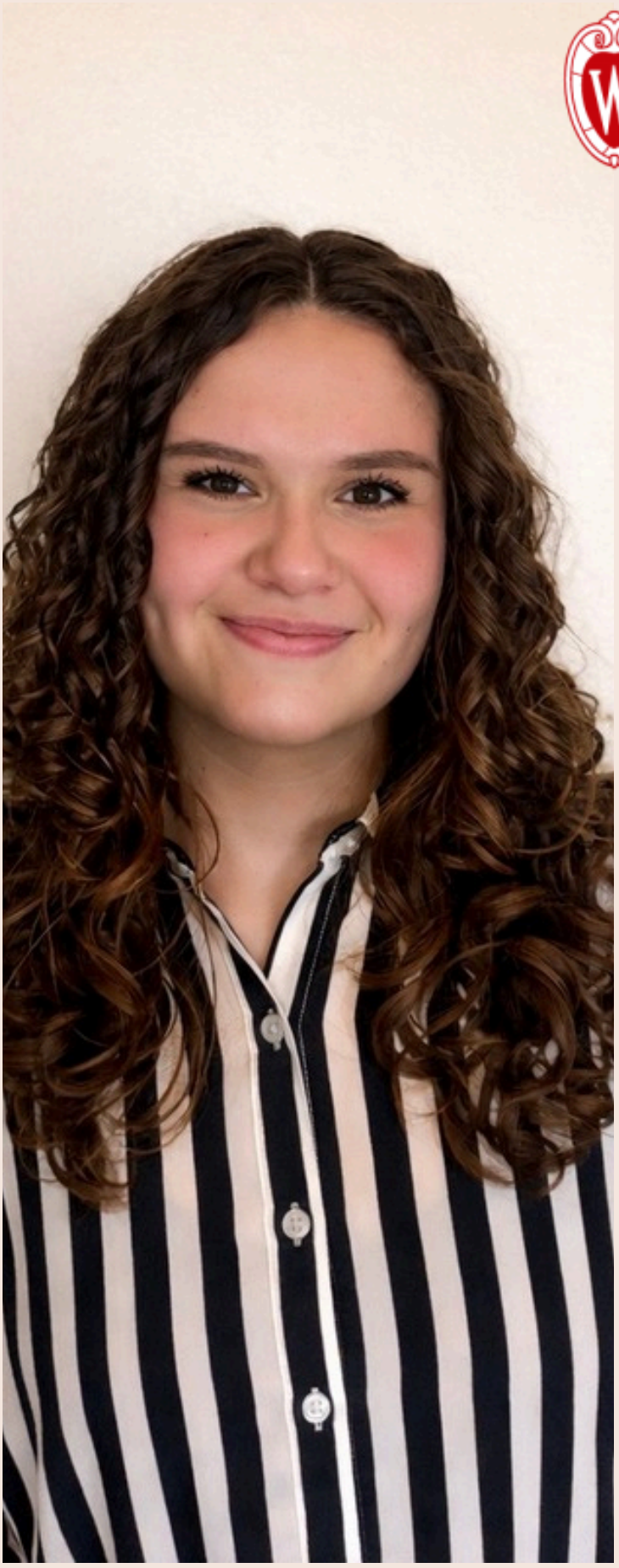
Tara received her BS in Food and Nutrition at North Dakota State University and her PhD in Nutritional Sciences at UW-Madison. She is also a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) and is a board certified specialist in sports dietetics (CSSD). She is the coordinator for the Didactic Program in Dietetics, as well as a teacher in undergraduate and graduate courses. In addition to this, Dr. Larowe also teaches in Physical Therapy and teaches in the Medical School.

Things like food service operations are a traditional part of dietetics, but trends seem to be moving towards culinary nutrition.

Tara has said that dietitians can play a large role in this area by further pushing the idea that food and nutrition extend beyond a single dimension.

Students acclimated well to the course objectives, especially when the instructors were trying something new. The fan favorite was by far the final project, where students had a "Chopped" style competition. Dr. LaRowe and Dr. Willis developed a project that let students write their own recipes and present the dish to a judging panel. The judges consisted of Nutritional Sciences faculty, and the winner left the The Golden Spoon. Food Science 437 is described as teaching "Fundamentals, principles, and practices of the United States Food Systems, Food Service, and Food Service Management", but the teachings of this course extend far beyond the description.





UNDERGRADUATE HIGHLIGHT

Maria Hanes

Maria Hanes is a Senior Nutrition & Dietetics major and a volunteer at the Child Development Lab in the School of Human Ecology.

After graduation this Spring, Maria will be completing her dietetic internship at the Mayo Clinic while also earning her Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

What drew you to work in this lab (Child Development Lab), and how did you get involved?

I found this lab through the Community of Practice Nutritional Sciences Canvas page. I was initially drawn to this internship because I've always loved working with children, and the Child Development Lab offered a unique opportunity to apply my nutrition knowledge in a way that I hadn't explored before. After applying, I had the chance to meet everyone who worked in the lab, including my supervisor for the internship, Katie Makowan. Everyone was so kind and welcoming from the start, and getting to know everyone made the experience much more enjoyable.

MARIA HANES

What's the most interesting or exciting thing you've worked on so far?

During the internship, I had the opportunity to give a nutrition education presentation to the five- year-old classroom. I decided to bake chocolate muffins that had "hidden" fruits and vegetables mixed into the batter. During the presentation, I conducted a taste test with the children and had them guess what the ingredients were. Many of them shouted, "Chocolate!" or "Sugar!" and when I revealed that there was actually spinach, carrots, and bananas inside, they were all shocked. It was so exciting to see their reactions, and I used that moment to explain how these foods have "superpowers" that help us grow and be strong. It was really rewarding to show the children that healthy foods CAN be delicious, even when they aren't expecting it!

Can you describe what a typical day in the lab looks like for you?

A typical day in the lab begins with brainstorming with the other volunteer to come up with one or two snack recipes to incorporate into the week. Our goal is to make use of the ingredients already available to us while choosing recipes that are nutritious and appetizing to the children. We often received feedback from teachers on what worked and what didn't, so we would use that as a starting point before choosing a recipe. From there, we make a snack that is inclusive to everyone, including those with dietary restrictions, so no one feels left out by having to have an alternative snack. Finally, after making the snacks, I would write out the recipes and calculate the nutrition facts to add to a recipe book.

What skills or experiences have you gained from working in the lab?

One of the most valuable skills I gained during my internship in the lab was the ability to apply my coursework in a practical setting. It is one thing to study for an exam but using that knowledge to develop recipes and educate children forces you to think more abstractly rather than in a “textbook” kind of way. Instead of completing assignments with clear instructions, I was given the freedom to use my own judgment. As a student, you become so used to having specific directions, so it was daunting at first to decide on my own approach. Overall, I am so glad I had this opportunity. In many ways, it made me a better student because I was able to make real-world connections with the material and see exactly how it impacted the children.

How has this experience shaped your future goals or career plans?

This experience has solidified my dream of becoming a dietitian. While I have always been interested in nutrition and enjoyed learning about it in classes, using that knowledge during my internship made the profession feel more real. It gave me a glimpse of what it actually means to be a dietitian beyond just having the technical knowledge. It was truly about making connections with people. At the end of the day, food is something everyone can relate to. Having the chance to share that with children gave me a perspective on the human aspects of dietetics. This experience made me proud to be part of a field that can have such a great impact, and it has only motivated me more to pursue my future career goal of becoming a dietitian.

DIETETICS AND NUTRITION CLUB

This semester, the Dietetics and Nutrition Club has been staying busy with a mix of career-focused events, guest speakers, and fun ways to connect as a group. One of the biggest highlights was our Networking with Dietitians event, where we heard from three dietitians who all do very different things within the field. It was really interesting to see how many different paths you can take with a nutrition degree. After they spoke, we had a roundtable session where members could rotate, ask questions, and have more personal conversations. It made the whole experience feel a lot more relaxed and interactive, and people got to walk away with some great advice and connections.

We've also been bringing in local dietitians to speak at our meetings every other Monday, which has been a great way to consistently learn from professionals and hear what their day-to-day actually looks like. It's been helpful for getting a better sense of what different careers in nutrition can look like beyond the classroom.

Outside of that, we've been focusing on building a strong sense of community. A lot of it has just been bonding over our shared interest in nutrition, but also getting involved in volunteering. We recently went to the Ronald McDonald House and made dinner, which was a really rewarding experience and a nice way to give back while spending time together.

Overall, it's been a really fun and productive semester, just a good mix of learning more about the field, meeting new people, and getting involved both on campus and in the community.

By - Dylan O'Brien, DNC President

Graduate Student Spotlight

Anshit Singh

Anshit is from Mumbai, India, and lived there until he moved to Madison in 2023. He did his undergraduate studies at St. Xavier's College in Mumbai, focusing on Biochemistry and Microbiology. Funnily enough, he started as a Physics major before falling in love with Biochemistry soon after enrolling. Afterwards, he obtained his Master's degree in Biological Sciences from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai.

Anshit attended a journal club that discussed a study of Professor Anderson's group, which jumpstarted his idea to apply to her PhD program. The paper focused on molecular mechanisms behind the effects of caloric restriction. While he had multiple options, he immediately dropped the others once he got an offer from the Nutrition and Metabolism Graduate Program. In an act of complete coincidence, Anshit's PI, Dr. Tim Rhoads, is the lead author of the study he had discussed with his peers a few years earlier.

Anshit is currently working on deciphering the molecular mechanisms behind the metabolic remodeling seen during caloric restriction. More specifically, he focuses on nuclear RNA helicase that he has found to be a metabolic “rheostat”; it tunes cellular metabolism in liver cells. While that is the primary focus, his work also spans RNA biology as well as mitochondrial and cellular metabolism. With these, Anshit leverages his expertise in bioenergetics to push research forward.

The current work that Anshit is focusing on is establishing a clear molecular link between cellular metabolism and RNA processing in the nucleus. He believes that they can leverage this to understand how caloric restriction remodels whole-body physiology. An ultimate aim of his is to gain insights into therapeutic strategies for aging. This also extends into age-associated disorders such as diabetes, fatty liver disease, and cardiovascular disease.

Some career aspirations for Anshit include being a faculty member with his own lab at a major research institution. He has always loved teaching and learning, so a career in academia would allow him to do both. While he was doing his undergraduate studies, he truly discovered his passion for teaching. He worked with an NGO to provide educational resources and food to underprivileged kids in Mumbai. When he was stuck in his home during the lockdowns of 2020, he created an online community of biology students and enthusiasts through Discord. Discord.gg/biology now has over 26,000 members across the globe, and they host teachers and speakers such as Nobel Laureate Dr. Randy Schekman.

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Anshit has loved being a graduate student at UW-Madison, for both scientific and personal reasons. He mentions Dr. Tim Rhoads, Prof. Judi Simcox, Prof. Roz Anderson, Prof. Luigi Puglielli, Prof. John Denu, Prof. Alan Attie, Prof. Rick Eisenstein, and all the professors who have taught him in his courses. He also highlights that his scientific journey wouldn't have been as smooth without the immense support from Caitlin, our graduate program coordinator. In his own words, she has, "gone our of her way countless times to help me and make living in a new country feel welcoming!". In addition, he also thanks Scott and Jennie, who are "pillars of the NMGP community.

Nutrition and Metabolism Graduate Program
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL & LIFE SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

In his free time, Anshit enjoys photography. He used to be a photographer and filmmaker during his undergraduate studies while he also worked on a few indie productions. He has also recently been getting into birding!

AGNES SHERMAN

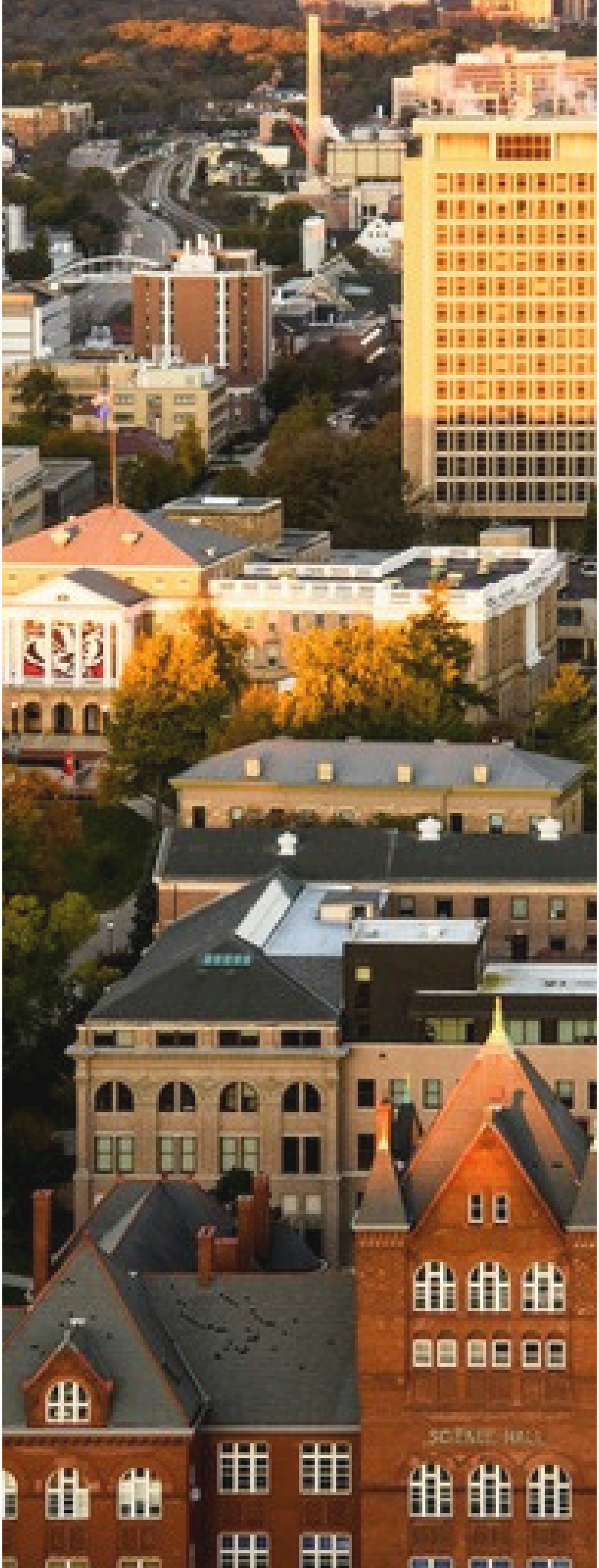
Agnes Sherman MS, RD, CD

The course NS540: Community Nutrition and Health Equity, includes speakers working in different areas of community nutrition to expose students to possible career opportunities in the dietetics profession. An alumni of the Nutritional Sciences department's Nutrition and Dietetics program, Agnes Sherman, RDN, recently spoke to the class about food insecurity among college students.

Agnes began her career in clinical dietetics, moved to food service administration in K12 nutrition, and then shifted into university food service.

College students all over the country are experiencing food insecurity and UW Madison is no exception to this. A Hope Lab study conducted in 2018 found that nearly 36 percent of university students were food insecure.

This means that many students have times where they have limited access to adequate food to sustain themselves. This is due to several reasons including higher tuition costs, increased cost of living, and imbalance in wage increases. According the a Georgetown University report, the cost of a college education has gone up 169% since 1980, although wages have only increased 19%. With this being such a prominent issue on college campuses, what is UW Madison doing to help?



Agnes's current position provides her with insight on large scale food operations and how that can help assist in programming to combat food insecurity. She has used her position in Housing and Dining Services to create a program aimed at addressing this problem of student food insecurity. The Nutrition Access Program was started by Agnes in partnership with former UW Food Science lecturer, Monica Theis. Dr. Theis's connection to grant funding, through the American Family Dreams Foundations, kick-started the program and continues to support the annual costs of running it. Their program works to repackage and freeze unserved dining hall food, which is then distributed to several freezers on campus where students can pick up meals with no eligibility requirements and no questions asked. Currently, they produce 200-350 meals a week which go out to UW students.

An example of another successful program on campus is the Swipe Out Hunger campaign, which the Office of Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) sponsors every semester. With this program, students can donate their meal swipes on a UW Housing meal plan to other students in need. Meal swipes are preloaded onto meal cards that can be used at any of the six UW Housing dining locations. A monetary donation can also be made at a Wisconsin Union or UW Bookstore location.

The Open Seat is another example of an on-campus organization. A student-run food pantry, the Open Seat is a place where students can go to get food when in need. Located at the Student Activity Center, The Open Seat provides students with both shelf-stable and fresh foods free of cost with no eligibility requirements. While food insecurity remains an issue on campus, there are people working to fight it. Here is a list of resources in Madison and Dane County for anyone needing food.

Written by Beth Olson

HELLENIC STUDENT ASSOCIATION

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME!

HSA CHAPTER

Department Teaching Faculty Stavroula Antonopoulos advises new Hellenic Student Association on campus.

Beginning Fall 2025 semester, Stavroula became the first faculty sponsor for the UW-Madison HSA chapter.

This was a milestone that reflects both her pride in her heritage and her enthusiasm for supporting students seeking cultural connection.

The group has already hosted an exciting lineup of events celebrating Greek traditions.

Stavroula N. Antonopoulos (Left) and Sophia Ullmann (Right), HSA co-president, pictured together at the first meeting of the Spring 2026 semester.

Stavroula N. Antonopoulos, MS, RDN is a teaching faculty in our department, who teaches NUTR SCI 132: Nutrition Today and NUTR SCI 377: Cultural Aspects of Food and Nutrition. Stavroula's Greek heritage plays a central role in both her personal identify and professional passions. As the granddaughter of Greek immigrants, she grew up deeply connected to her culture, attending Greek School for 13 years and seeking out every opportunity to celebrate and share Greek Traditions, foodways, and community.

This past year, UW–Madison students Leila Skoulikaris and Sophia Ullmann approached Stavroula to serve as the faculty sponsor for a new campus chapter of the Hellenic Student Association (HSA). The HSA at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is a campus organization that promotes Hellenic (Greek and Cypriot) culture, language, history, and current events through education, friendship, and mentorship. Additionally, the National Student Hellenic Association (NHSA) is the largest Hellenic student and young professional organization in North America, with over 50 member-chapters, which promotes Hellenism (the national character or culture of Greece), education, mentorship, and overall unity of the Hellenic community.

Top Image: HSA's first meeting

Bottom Image: Theo Vasilopoulos (Left), HSA's secretary, Leila Skoulikaris (Middle) and Sophia Ullmann (Right), HSA's co-presidents highlighting Spring 2026 events

Some activities have included:

- Guest Speaker: Emmanuel Koubarakis, Consul General of Greece in Chicago
- Frappe Social – featuring the iconic Greek iced coffee
- Cooking Lessons – introducing students to classic Greek flavors and dishes
- Game/Sports Nights – bringing together community through friendly competition
- Vasilopita Making & Cutting– baking the traditional New Year's cake that contains a hidden coin (vasilopita translates to "St. Basil's cake," and the person who finds the coin is said to have good luck for the year)
- Koulourakia Bake-Off – highlighting buttery, orange-scented Greek twist cookies often enjoyed around Easter.
- Evil Eye (Mati) Bracelet Making – exploring the cultural meaning of the mati, a protective symbol believed to ward off negativity.
- Valentine's Day Cards for the Greek American Nursing Home

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ACCOLADES

Laura Hernandez

Federico Rey

Scott Rankin

Juyeong Cho

Karen Antunes

Eric McGregor

CLICK ON EACH PERSON TO LEARN MORE!

Hoang Bui

Marcia Verhage

BEHIND THE SCENES

Department Administrator

Marcia Verhage

2026 CALS Academic Staff Excellence award Winner, Marcia is the lead of all things business in the department. With a career spanning over 35 years at UW there is little that she doesn't know or hasn't seen. From HR to grant proposals, Marcia is a valuable resource to the department.

Building Manager

Ray Van Cleve

Mr. Fix It, Ray is our go to person for all things physical plant and all building matters. Ray keeps an eye on the future as he enusres the building stays warm in the winter, cool in summer, and has led projects to beuatify the Nutritional Sciences Building.

Administrative Specialist

Jennie Edelstein

Our logisitcs wizard, Jennie is the face of the department to many of our visitors. She coordinates the travel and experieince of our seminar speakers and visiting graduate students. Jennie also aids in tracking payroll, and any other duty given to her.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Financial Specilist

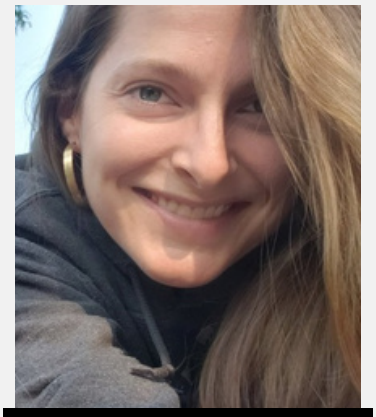
Nick Dydra

Nick is our accounting specialist. With a CPA accreditation, Nick keeps an eye on our daily expenses and helps PIs manage their budgets. Nick also aids in purchasing, payroll, and navigating the many financial polies of the university. Nick also helps our PI's plan for the future with financial forecasting.

Undergraduate Advisor

Sarah Golla

Sarah advises 190 undergraduate students, dedicating each day to ensuring they feel seen, supported, and valued. Her work extends well beyond course selection, as she helps students navigate their goals, aspirations, and academic journeys. In addition to advising, Sarah plays an active role in recruitment efforts, engages with prospective students and their families, and is committed to ensuring every student leaves with a meaningful and high-quality educational experience.



Graduate Program Manager

Caitlin Seifert Irland

Caitlin serves as a guiding force for our graduate students, providing steady mentorship and insight across 103 students and our department's training grant. She plays a key role in recruiting new graduate students and contributes meaningfully to the department through her service on several committees, bringing a thoughtful and perceptive perspective to each.

BEHIND THE SCENES

IT/Web Manager

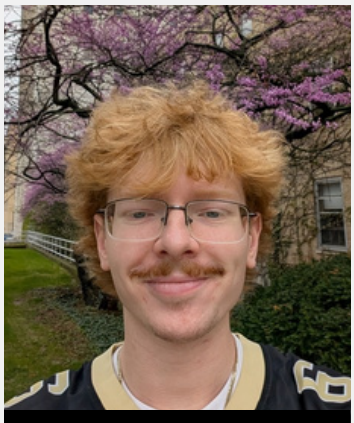
Liz Kalmbach

When she is not rehabilitating one of the many rodents given to her as Wisconsin WildCare's Small Rodent Care Director, Liz is the go to for your other mouse problems, anything IT. From websites to databases to custom set ups, Liz spends her days between NS and FS rehabilitating our computers.

Administrative Manager

Scott Anderson

Averaging several miles walked around the building daily. Scott is normally out of his office and speaking to PIs and other managers solving difficult problems, working on financial puzzles both pre-award and post award, aiding in recruitment and marketing, or gathering data. He is the departmental reference on many subjects and will find the answer to your question.



Student Office Help

Riley Langlois

Although not always regarded as his proper title, "Department Superman", Riley helps in multiple areas of the department. He's most commonly found helping Liz with various IT tasks, but is always ready to take on a one-off job.

MATCH THAT CHAIR

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Guess the Chair in each picture,
answers on the next page.

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Click on each photo and learn about each Chair's research.

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