

FALL 2021

IMPACT

**Your generosity
drives the future**



UNIVERSITY
OF MINNESOTA



COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL
AND NATURAL RESOURCE SCIENCES

A NOTE FROM DEAN BUHR



This fall, the University of Minnesota capped off a highly successful and historic *Driven* campaign, raising more than \$4 billion systemwide over the last 10 years. That is an astounding achievement for the University that will benefit generations to come — and it's all thanks to the generosity of donors.

The *Driven* campaign focused on five main priorities:

- Elevate a world-class student experience
- Accelerate advances in health

- Protect and sustain agriculture, food, and water
- Drive a Minnesota plan for innovation
- Provide a place of opportunity for everyone

Our work in CFANS advances all of these priorities. I am so grateful to share that during the *Driven* campaign, our CFANS community raised \$309 million in total gifts, pledges, and private grants. More than 20,000 donors, including alumni, private donors, corporations, faculty, and staff helped make this number become a reality. **You** made this become a reality — fueling us to meet our College goals of teaching tomorrow's leaders, creating science-based solutions, growing Minnesota's economy, and extending Minnesota's impact globally.

Your generosity provided more than \$50 million to support our CFANS students, including 131 scholarships and fellowships created. You provided more than \$200 million to support CFANS research and faculty,

and \$50 million in program support and outreach. And thanks to you, we were able to apply nearly \$8 million to much-needed capital improvements.

As I reflect on this campaign response, I am humbled by the trust you have put in CFANS to deliver on our mission of inspiring minds, nourishing people, and enhancing the natural environment. The stories in this issue of *Impact* illustrate just a small fraction of the results of your contributions and support. Your generosity has impacted countless people as we bring discoveries to life through science and educate the next generation of leaders who will seek answers to the world's grand challenges and solve tomorrow's problems.

With gratitude,

Brian Buhr

Dean, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

CFANS raised:

\$309 million

TOTAL GIFTS, PLEDGES,
& PRIVATE GRANTS



STUDENT SUPPORT
\$50.4 MILLION



PROGRAM SUPPORT
AND OUTREACH
\$50 MILLION



RESEARCH AND
FACULTY SUPPORT
\$200.2 MILLION



CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENTS
\$7.8 MILLION

WHY I GIVE TO CFANS

By **Trey O'Bryan**, BS Agricultural and Food Business Management, '17; member of the CFANS Dean's Circle Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD); currently a commodity merchant at Cargill



I choose to give back to CFANS and the University of Minnesota as an alumnus because I view it as a way to “pay it forward” and hopefully help build a positive experience for others. As a first-generation student from rural Minnesota, attending college was both very difficult and intimidating, and if it wasn't for CFANS, I don't know if I would have graduated or if I would have been blessed with the opportunities I have since been presented with. For me, CFANS represents three things.

1. Positive, life-changing relationships
2. A framework to explore your interests and identify your passions
3. An academic environment that becomes a foundation for career success

CFANS provided faculty and staff that have positively impacted my life — I think particularly of **Liz Hruska**, an advisor who helped prevent me from dropping out my freshman year and has since been a great friend and mentor.

CFANS provided me with a framework that allowed me to explore my interests while accelerating my academic progress. As an undergraduate, I was able to travel and study abroad affordably and participate in student groups that encourage diversity of thought and provide “real-world” professional experiences. For me, some of those experiences were relevant to the career I ended up choosing and some weren't, but all provided valuable learning experiences.

Finally, CFANS provided a rigorous and relevant classroom environment that helped me be competitive professionally immediately upon graduation. While I was challenged, I always felt supported by my professors and advisors and knew academic success was achievable.

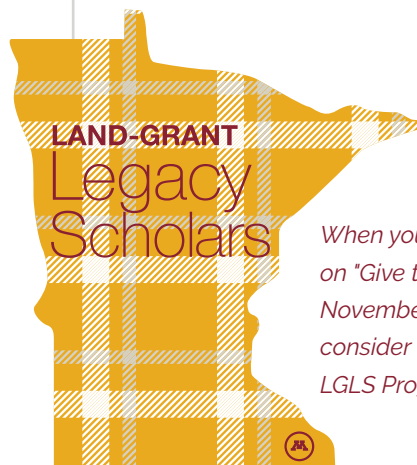
Ultimately, I volunteer in the hopes that other students can find the same community and success that I did. CFANS is a great organization that I consider myself lucky to be an alumnus of, and I am happy to give back to that organization today.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS FROM GREATER MINNESOTA

The Land Grant Legacy Scholars (LGLS) Program is a student success and scholarship program that supports students from Greater Minnesota (outside of the seven-county metro area) who are admitted to CFANS. LGLS offers a four-year experience that includes targeted, programmatic elements designed to support students during their time at the U of M and build community through a cohort model, as well as a financial scholarship worth \$20,000 over four years.

Through this programming and scholarship support, this unique program benefits students academically, personally, and financially as they pursue their CFANS degree.

“CFANS is uniquely poised to help our graduates address the grand challenges that we face as a society,” said CFANS **Dean Brian Buhr**. “We are committed to playing a role in making this institution and all of the colleges and campuses more accessible to students from all 87 counties.”



When you give to CFANS on “Give to the Max Day” on November 18 (and beyond), consider contributing to the LGLS Program.



STUDENT SUPPORT
\$50.4 MILLION

Scholarships, fellowships *foster the future*



COURTESY PHOTOS



PONCE WAS AN FFA OFFICER AND INVOLVED IN MANY HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

Hilariia Ponce is a driven young leader with the ambition of lifelong learning. In high school, she loved being busy and involved in many activities. As an FFA vice president; dedicated student; avid volunteer in the community; student athlete; manager for two high school sports teams; participant in multiple clubs and holder of a part-time job, she was committed to growing her own skills while contributing to the growth of those around her.

Based on this description, it's easy to make the assumption that Ponce would automatically attend the college of her choice. In actuality, however, the idea of going to college did not always seem feasible.

"I grew up as a struggling minority with a single parent who was raising six children," said Ponce, a CFANS first-year student with a double major in Agricultural Education and Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management. "Being the last child, I struggled to look at college as an opportunity due to our funds until my junior year when I joined FFA," she said.

FFA was new to her school, Ponce explains, and she became a committed leading officer, helping to elect chapter and region officers. She also competed in floriculture, poultry, and prepared public speaking, in which she was named section champion for her speech about diversity and inclusion in FFA.

At CFANS, Ponce is especially looking forward to the long-lasting relationships she'll form here. "It is so heartening to receive a gift from a generous donor that allows a student like me to get a better opportunity at college," she said. "I can't wait for what CFANS will teach me, and that wouldn't be possible without the fantastic donors." Ponce is the recipient of a Cargill THRIVE Program scholarship and the W. Forrest Bear Agriculture Education Endowed Fund.



Stephen Pitts, currently pursuing his PhD thanks to a donor-created fellowship, was an undergraduate student studying computer science when two service trips to Mexico opened his eyes to poverty in the developing world. After graduation, he joined the Jesuits, a Roman Catholic religious order that works internationally for education and social justice.

He pursued his master's degree in International Development Economics, which taught him how to help people make long-lasting change to their communities of origin.

"My thesis was an impact evaluation of a coffee cooperative in the southern Mexico state of Chiapas. During my field research, I was introduced to the coffee value chain — from bean to cup — and the importance of providing producers with the opportunity to export a finished product," said Pitts. "Building a coffee plant in the same communities where they harvest the coffee does more long-term good than many fair trade solutions, which process beans in the United States."

As the recipient of the Jean Kinsey Graduate Fellowship, Pitts is able to pursue his doctoral studies at CFANS in Applied Economics, continuing his interest in trade and development, and studying other industries like auto manufacturing in Mexico. "I also hope to learn more about the environment so that Latin America can develop sustainably, making use of their many natural resources without destroying them," he said.

In the future, Pitts hopes to teach at a university sponsored by the Jesuits, train the next generation of development practitioners, and continue to work with projects in Latin America. "For the past two years, I've worked on the U.S./Mexico border in El Paso, Texas. My doctoral studies at CFANS are the next step in the call I feel to address the root causes of the suffering I have heard in this community."

STEPHEN PITTS CONDUCTED FIELD RESEARCH IN CHIAPAS, MEXICO AND LEARNED ABOUT THE COFFEE VALUE CHAIN.



COURTESY PHOTOS

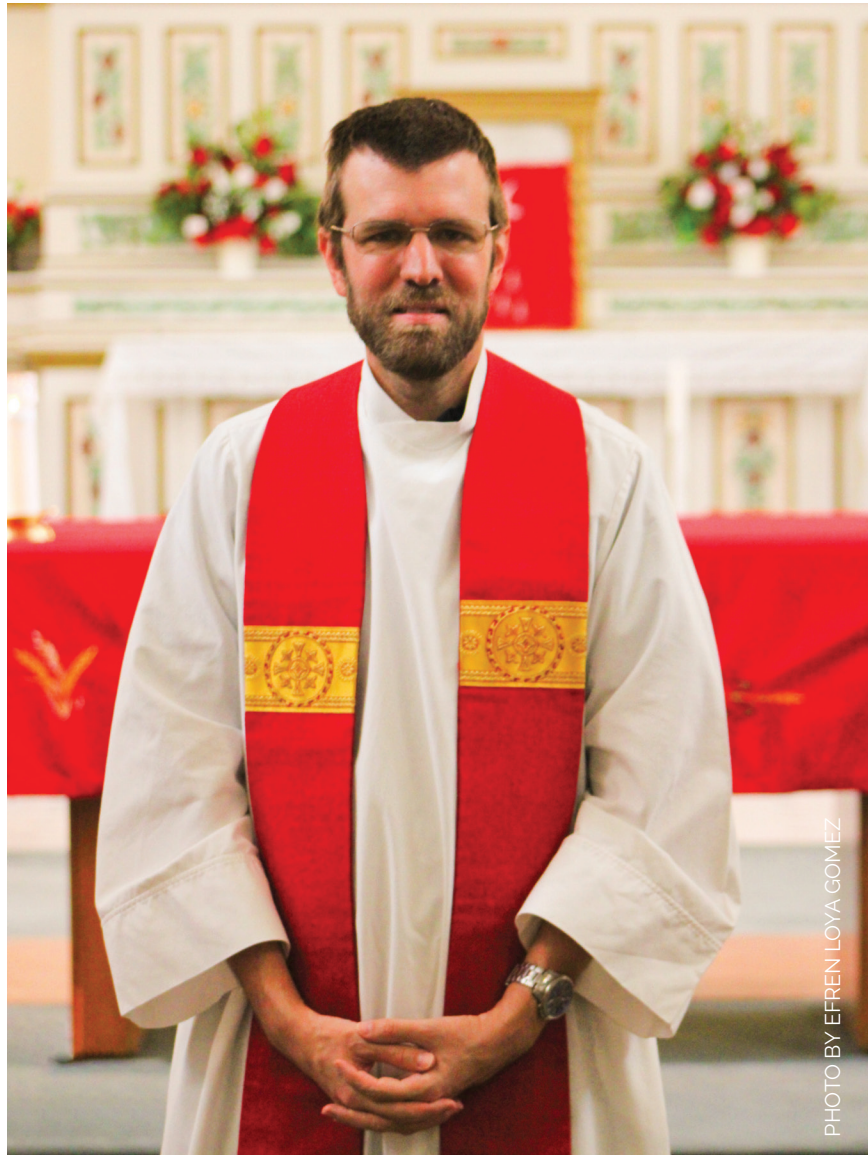


PHOTO BY EFREN LOYA GOMEZ



CENTERS OF SCIENCE

Bell Museum and Bee Lab engage the public, promote research

Over the last 10 years, the St. Paul campus has seen two signature buildings come to life thanks to public-private partnerships, each highlighted by generous donor support throughout the *Driven* campaign.

The stunning new 92,000-square-foot Bell Museum opened in July 2018, seeing record attendance in its first year. Founded in 1872, the Bell is Minnesota's official natural history museum and is a proud part of CFANS. It continues to delight thousands of visitors each year by delivering on its mission of igniting curiosity and wonder, exploring connections to nature and the universe, and creating a better future for our evolving world.

The \$79.2 million building was made possible through state bonding and through generous donations from our CFANS partners.

In 2016, CFANS opened the new 10,000-square-foot Bee Lab. It serves as home to our internationally recognized research and teaching program, providing opportunities for enhanced interdisciplinary and worldwide collaborations. The Bee Lab provides a rich learning environment to promote the conservation, health and diversity of bee pollinators through research, education, and hands-on mentorship.

The \$6 million building was made possible through state-funded bonds covering two-thirds of the cost, with the rest coming from private gifts.

Giving is *fruitful* for science

As Minnesota Gophers, we're proud of the famous apple varieties, including Honeycrisp, that hail from our great state — but did you know that until 1888 we weren't able to grow apples here due to the cold climate? That's when the U of M began its revolutionary fruit breeding program that has since released nearly 30 varieties of apples enjoyed by apple lovers far and wide — most recently, the pleasantly tart and highly disease-resistant cultivar called Triumph™.

Today, more than 130 years later, the breeding program is going strong and producing a variety of fruits — including grapes, pears and berries — that thrive in cold regions.

Adrian Hegeman, PhD, professor in the Departments of Horticultural Science and the College of Biological Sciences' Department of Plant and Microbial Biology, is dedicated to research that improves fruit species. He started as the Luby Honeycrisp Endowed Chair for Fruit Crop Innovation in 2017 and, as he explains, has primarily been using it as an opportunity to engage with the U of M's grape breeding program.

"This funding has allowed me to collaborate on new grape varieties and discover genetic markers associated with things like flavor and fragrance compounds," said Hegeman. "Our research in genetics and plant metabolomics helps us procure information about grape quality much faster than before."

High-quality grapes that tolerate northern climates like Minnesota are good for the economy, providing opportunities for regional growers and vineyards, and delicious local wines for consumers to enjoy.

"Breeding fruit for cold tolerance is hard," said Hegeman. "To make something that will adapt to new environments, or new diseases, or other conditions, is a challenge that requires bringing in genetic diversity. I'm so grateful to the Luby family for their commitment to this important work and their generous support."

Peg Luby appreciates Hegeman as well. "My family and I are thankful for what the Luby Family Honeycrisp Endowed Chair for Fruit Crop Innovation has accomplished," she said. "And talk about innovation — Adrian was an excellent pick for the endowed chair. He has already built on the great legacy of fruit innovation at CFANS, and it's always exciting to hear what he's been doing."



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STUDENTS POSE WITH GOLDY AT THE CAMPUS KICK-OFF EVENT.

Introducing the Cargill University THRIVE Program

In spring 2021, Cargill and the University of Minnesota announced the Cargill University THRIVE Program. The program supports eight universities and associations that are prioritizing higher education opportunities for underrepresented students, ensuring more equitable access for women and minority students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), agriculture and business.

In September, the U of M welcomed the inaugural group of 30 first-year scholars from CFANS, the Carlson School of Management, and the College of Science and Engineering, celebrating them with a campus kick-off event attended by Cargill's University of Minnesota Executive Champion, **Melissa Leick** (College of Liberal Arts, '98) and other Cargill representatives.

This fall, the Cargill University THRIVE Program will bring a program staff coordinator on board and select 10 second-year students at the end of both fall and spring semesters to receive scholarships and leadership and professional development programming in spring semester — growing the program to 50 annual scholarship recipients by fall 2022.

Hilariia Ponce, a first-year student featured in this issue of *Impact*, is one of the CFANS Cargill THRIVE scholars.



Investing in ag ed

CHS Foundation generosity champions the *AgriCast* initiative

As the world looks to sustainably nourish a growing population, the demand for K-12 agriculture, food, and natural resource teachers has increased exponentially in Minnesota and elsewhere — and CFANS plays a key role in educating these future educators.

Thanks to CHS Foundation support, the Department of Agricultural Education, Communication and Marketing (AECM) is able to offer the student-driven platform *AgriCast*, a digital resource and website dedicated to sharing science concepts and stories. *AgriCast* includes content produced by AECM students, including podcasts, virtual field trips, lesson plans, and a video library with stories on current topics.

"*AgriCast* is where much of our AECM students' hard work can be viewed," said **Troy McKay**, PhD, CHS Digital Media Teaching Assistant Professor in the department. "It's a digital platform produced with intention. Not only do students build 21st century communication skills, the content is packaged to meet the needs of current K-12 ag teachers, many of whom are CFANS graduates."

McKay, who spent much of his career in the film industry, transitioned to higher education to bring his working knowledge of media production to the classroom. "When students know their work is going out to the public and not just for a grade in class, the stakes are raised," he said. "As technologies change, our graduates may be looking for guidance in the future. *AgriCast* is a great resource to stay engaged with former students and provide professional development, as well."

McKay is grateful to the CHS Foundation, explaining that his position wouldn't exist without its support. "The CHS funding has provided cutting-edge technologies that allow students to be creative and produce relevant content," he said.



Curious to check out the content on *AgriCast* for yourself?

Scan this code with your phone's camera to visit the website.



**PROGRAM SUPPORT
AND OUTREACH
\$50 MILLION**



CFANS
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL
AND NATURAL RESOURCE SCIENCES

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cfans.umn.edu


GIVE TO THE MAX DAY
18 NOVEMBER 2021

SUPPORT CFANS LAND-GRANT LEGACY SCHOLARS

Help CFANS celebrate Minnesota's annual "giving holiday" — a special day for Minnesotans to give to the causes and organizations that mean the most to them.

This year for Give to the Max Day, consider donating to the Land-Grant Legacy Scholars (LGLS) Program, which supports students from Greater Minnesota who are admitted to CFANS.

Visit the website to participate, and don't worry if you missed it; we'll keep the campaign open until December 31.

Z.UMN.EDU/CFANSGTMD2021



Support CFANS

Scan this code with your phone's camera to visit the donation page.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to DiscoverSM

