About the College

160 Years of Leadership

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is one of the world’s leading institutions of agriculture, with more than 160 years of leadership in science, education and extension. The college educates future leaders, conducts mission-oriented research and shares new knowledge for the betterment of Iowa and the world.

World Ranking

The college is one of eight at Iowa State University, which is one of the most influential land grant universities in the nation. Iowa State ranks among the best in the world for agricultural programs. The college ranked in the top four percent worldwide among 411 institutions for the past nine years and has ranked in the top 10 list four of the past 13 years. (QS World University Rankings, agricultural and forestry programs).

Education

The college prepares leaders who will meet future challenges.

- More than 26 undergraduate majors and 35 graduate programs are offered.
- More than 4,300 students registered for online courses in fiscal year 2022.
- Science With Practice allows students to work with faculty mentors who are international experts, while earning credits and a paycheck.
- More than 100 students take the Start Something College of Agriculture and Life Sciences capstone course each year. At the end of the semester the students present business plans to investors and entrepreneurs.
- CALS students won the American Farm Bureau Federation’s Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2015, 2016 and 2019. Five additional business ventures developed by our students have been named national semifinalists in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2023.
- The college hosts the nation’s largest career fair and employers compete for our graduates: placement has been 97 percent or higher for 24 consecutive years.
- Approximately $4 million in scholarships are offered to students annually through the college and its departments.
- Iowa State’s agricultural and biosystems engineering undergraduate program is ranked fifth and its graduate program is ranked second nationwide (U.S. News & World Report).
- The college has the second highest four-year retention rate on campus and leads campus in four-year graduation rates.
Faculty and Staff

The college has 303 tenure/tenure eligible faculty, 105 term faculty, 450 professional and scientific staff and 47 merit staff in 14 departments. Eight departments are co-administered by another college. Nine faculty members have received national honors from the USDA Food and Agricultural Sciences Excellence in Teaching Awards. The college has 36 named faculty positions.

Global Programs

The college is a national leader in student participation in study-abroad programs. Students are encouraged to integrate international dimensions and perspectives into their educational and career goals. For more than 65 years, the Global Programs unit has led international programs to countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. The college’s goal is to help students become global citizens with multicultural views.

Research and Economic Development and Agriculture Experiment Station

The college is a leader in mission-oriented research that addresses practical problems and contributes to Iowa’s economy and quality of life. Some of the most significant innovations in agriculture and life sciences can be credited to Iowa State.

- The college ranks in the top five for the number of faculty with federal research grants and in the top six nationally for the total number of federal grants out of 60 agricultural colleges (Academic Analytics, 2022).
- The college is a leader in moving into a new era of discovery about living organisms and life processes. Responding quickly to emerging needs, providing leadership to solve critical challenges and partnering to achieve goals are trademarks of the college.
- Over the last five years, Experiment Station scientists successfully brought in more than $300 million in external funding to address critical needs and expand scientific frontiers.
- The college is committed to be at the forefront in the application of science and bringing it to commercialization.
- Research strengths include:
  - Advanced machinery engineering
  - Agricultural and biological sciences
  - Agricultural economics and policy
  - Air quality and livestock odor
  - Animal breeding and genetics
  - Animal nutrition
  - Biorenewable fuels and products
  - Food science and human nutrition
  - Genetics and genomics, plant and animal
  - Meat science
  - Plant health
  - Seed science and technology
  - Water quality

Extension and Outreach

Extension to Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) serves Iowans daily, delivering science-based information and education vital to farmers, businesses, communities and consumers. ANR also listens to understand needs, emerging issues and help plan for the future. ANR is the largest unit in ISU Extension and Outreach, involving 40 faculty and staff in 9 departments and 41 field specialists across Iowa.

Engaged Alumni

Alumni are strong supporters of the college and university. More than 24,000 of our 46,376 alumni live in Iowa. Sixty-eight percent of our new graduates begin their careers in Iowa following graduation. Forty-two percent have donated to Iowa State University and 20 percent have donated to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. In the last fiscal year, alumni and friends gave more than $40 million to support students, faculty and programs.

www.cals.iastate.edu

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