



### By Lynn Reinschmiedt

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Whether you want a career designing medical devices or award-winning landscapes, Mississippi State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has a program for you. The same is true if you want to work with animals, plants or food products.

When parents and students hear about CALS, they often associate the potential career opportunities with production agriculture. Educating students who will produce food and fiber is an important part of our mission, but only a small percentage our students actually work on farms.

When Jennifer Little, the college's recently hired admissions coordinator, speaks to prospective students, she likes to say, "We have an academic home for everybody." That may be an overstatement, but prospective students and parents are amazed at the diversity of academic programs available and the career opportunities they open up—often responding with comments like "I had no idea this existed" or "you offer that?"

The 10 academic units within the College of Agriculture and Life Science offer 16 undergraduate majors within which students may pursue 52 different concentrations. At the graduate level, we offer six master's programs with 15 concentrations and four doctoral programs with 13 concentrations.

Here is just a sample of what the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is and what it has to offer:

- CALS has 1,260 undergraduates, including the 170 students in the biological engineering program offered jointly with the Bagley College of Engineering, and 270 graduate students.

- Forty-seven percent of our students are female (consistent with national statistics for colleges of agriculture). Ethnic minority enrollment is 13 percent.
- The college has a number of preprofessional program options including pre dental, prelaw, premedicine; prepharmacy and pre-veterinary medicine. Many students also use our programs in preparation for degrees in physical therapy and nursing.
- MSU biochemistry and biological engineering graduates applying to medical or dental school have a 90 percent acceptance rate.
- For students with a creative or artistic flair, the college offers degrees in landscape architecture, landscape contracting; the apparel textile merchandizing and design concentration in human sciences and the retail floristry management concentration in horticulture.
- Biochemistry offers students career opportunities in pharmaceuticals and the forensic sciences (popularized by TV's CSI shows).
- The food science and nutrition programs in CALS offer many exciting career tracks in the increasingly vital areas of health, nutrition and food safety.
- Four programs (poultry science, animal and dairy science, biochemistry, and food science and nutrition) offer "3+1 pre-veterinary medicine programs." Students who complete a required curriculum of core major requirements in these programs and are accepted into veterinary school can receive their bachelor's degree upon successful completion of their first year.
- CALS undergraduates may enhance their learning opportunities through part-time work alongside faculty and graduate students working in MSU labs, office research settings or on the university's research farms.

Prospective students and their parents in particular are pleased to learn about the scholarship opportunities in the college. Thanks to the long-term financial contributions and support of alumni, the private sector, commodity and trade organizations and others, more than \$250,000 in scholarships are awarded each year throughout the college. The bulk of these scholarships are awarded to sophomore, junior and senior students who have proven themselves academically at MSU or a community college.

Many students excel academically or develop outstanding leadership skills once at MSU even if they enter the university without stellar ACT scores and other credentials that garner premium entering freshman scholarships. College and departmental scholarships provide a means to recognize and support those students who step up and perform.

In closing, let me encourage you to help us spread the word about the exciting opportunities offered by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. You can let us know of prospective students by contacting Jennifer Little at 662-325-5851 or [little@cals.msstate.edu](mailto:little@cals.msstate.edu)

Also, to learn more about the college and its programs visit our Website at [www.cals.msstate.edu/](http://www.cals.msstate.edu/).