

CALS Undergraduate Awards Application

Application

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) is committed to recognizing students for academic excellence; demonstrated leadership; and significant CALS, campus and/or community involvement. At the CALS Awards Banquet (Tuesday, April 16, 2026), CALS will recognize ten seniors and three juniors who are highly meritorious and exemplify leadership, scholarship and the college's core values of Integrity, Diversity, Collaboration and Service.

Recipients of the following awards will be determined from the ten seniors: J. Wayne Reitz Medal of Excellence - CALS Outstanding Senior Award, Larry J. Connor Medal of Excellence, CALS Alumni and Friends Leadership Award, and Emelie L. Matthews Award of Excellence. Three outstanding juniors will be recognized as finalists and one will be named the E.T. York Medal of Excellence winner.

Detailed information for each award and a list of past winners can be found on the [CALS Website](#).

To be eligible, the following minimum criteria must be met:

- Be enrolled in a CALS bachelor's degree program
- Seniors must graduate in Spring 2026, Summer 2026 or Fall 2026
- Juniors must graduate in Spring 2027, Summer 2027 or Fall 2027

- Have a cumulative UF GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Have demonstrated a high degree of leadership and service to CALS, UF and/or the community

This application will not allow you to save and return to complete. [Preview the application here](#). Before you begin, gather the following required materials:

- Resume (2-page limit; Example can be found at cals.ufl.edu/content/pdf/awards-resume-example.pdf)
 - Do not include your name, major, contact information or GPA
 - No smaller than 10 pt font, Times or Arial, 1 inch margins, single spaced
 - Document must be in PDF format
- Typed responses to questions 1-5. (limited to two pages total, not two pages per question;

Example can be found at cals.ufl.edu/content/pdf/awards-responses-example.pdf)

- Do not include your name or contact information
- No smaller than 10 pt font, Times or Arial, 1 inch margins, single spaced
- Document must be in PDF format and answer all five questions:

1. Describe how the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has helped you prepare for the next phase of your life.
2. Choose the ONE experience from your resume most important to you. Describe the experience in detail and tell how it was impactful.
3. What has been the greatest obstacle you have faced while a student at UF? How did you overcome it and what did you learn in the process?

4. How have you embraced your fellow students, faculty and staff; promoted and supported innovative thinking; and valued differences while a student in CALS?
5. What does leadership mean to you and how have you served as a leader during your time as a UF student?

- A biography (200 to 250 words)
- Names and email addresses of two UF faculty/staff willing to provide a letter of support for your application (must be current UF employees)

Applicant responsibilities:

- Communicate with your references to ensure letters are submitted. Your application is due January 16, 2026. Recommendation letters must be received by **January 16, 2026**.
- Provide your references with the following link for submitting information: [2026 CALS Awards Reference Form](#)
- If you are chosen as a finalist, the CALS Dean's Office will record and edit a video of you, which may take up to an hour of your time. All finalists will receive an email to select dates, times and locations for recording the video. The CALS team will begin video recording after March 2, 2026.

The CALS Dean's Office will:

- Contact your undergraduate coordinator to verify program support of your application
- Verify your graduation semester/year and GPA

- **Disqualify all applicants with incomplete applications** (including applications missing recommendation letters or resumes)
- Announce the selected ten seniors and three juniors in February

Finalists will be expected to participate in the CALS Awards Banquet on April 16, 2026. Award winners will be announced at that time.

Questions? Call 352-392-1963 or email cemer@ufl.edu

Applications are due **January 16, 2025 by 11:59 p.m.** All reference letters must be **RECIEVED by January 16, 2026, 11:59 p.m.**

Biographical Information

First Name

Preferred Name

Will be used on award and promotional materials if you are a finalist. Repeat your first name if it is the same as your preferred name.

Last Name

Preferred Pronouns

UF ID

Example: 12345678

UF email

Phone number

Local street address

City

State

Zip code

Hometown and State (Anywhere, FL)
or Country

What is your major?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Education and Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Management in Agriculture and Natural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Sciences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Operations Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Microbiology and Cell Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> Family, Youth and Community Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resource Conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and Resource Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutritional Sciences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Botany | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Resources and Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dietetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Geomatics | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Ecology and Conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entomology and Nematology | | |

I have or will complete a minor(s).

- ☐ Yes (If yes, list each minor below)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Undecided

I have or will complete a certificate(s).

- ☐ Yes (If yes, list each certificate below)
-
- ☐ No
- ☐ Undecided

I received an AA degree and was a transfer student from another institution.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Expected UF Graduation

Semester

Year

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Answer ALL FIVE of the questions below using the following guidelines:

- Limit responses to two (2) pages TOTAL for all **FIVE** (**5**) questions (**NOT two pages per question**)
 - Choosing to respond more in depth to one question rather than another is acceptable as long as you remain inside the two-page total limit
 - Example can be found at cals.ufl.edu/content/pdf/awards-responses-example.pdf
- Single spaced
- Times New Roman or Arial font **ONLY**
 - No less than 10 point font
- 1 inch margins on each side
- Upload a PDF file not to exceed 16 MB in size

Essay Questions (respond to each question):

1. Describe how the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has prepared you for the next phase of your life.
2. Choose ONE experience from your resume most important to you. Describe in detail the experience

and how it was impactful.

3. What has been the greatest challenge/obstacle you have faced while a student at UF? How did you overcome it and what did you learn in the process?
4. How have you embraced your fellow students, faculty and staff; promoted and supported innovative thinking; and valued differences while a student in CALS?
5. What does leadership mean to you and how have you served as a leader during your time as a UF student?

Upload your resume as a **PDF** file, *files larger than 16 MB will not be accepted.*

Your resume should adhere to follow the following guidelines:

- *A maximum of 2 pages, outlining the following:*
 - *Campus involvement (clubs, organizations, research, internships, service, etc.)*
 - *Community involvement*
 - *Demonstrated leadership*

- Awards and honors

Provide a 200-250 word biography. **DO NOT include your name, major, contact info or GPA**

Note: It may be helpful to compose your response in a word processing program and copy and paste it into this field.

- Single spaced
- Times New Roman or Arial font **ONLY**

Example: Alberta Alligator is a Family Youth and Community Sciences senior from Sebring, Florida. She is a

member of the Family Youth and Community Sciences Club and the Gator Tennis Club. Alberta volunteers

at the Alachua County Library and has served as a tutor with After School Gators, helping children in math,

science, and history. She also has worked with exceptional children in local elementary schools. Alberta is

completing her honor's thesis on how parent connection and psychological control relate to identity

development.

[2026 CALS Awards Reference Form](#)

Provide the first names, last names and UF email addresses for two references.

Both references must be University of Florida faculty or staff with a Gatorlink email account and be prepared to submit the letter on departmental or UF letterhead.

References may not be relatives or significant others and should be able to attest to your accomplishments and professional potential. One of the two must be from your major or academic department.

REMINDER: It is your responsibility to solicit reference letters and be certain they are submitted by January 16, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.

Reference letters must be submitted electronically at [2026 CALS Awards Reference Form](#)

Reference 1 First & Last Name

Reference 1 UF Email

Reference 2 First & Last Name

Reference 2 UF Email

Have you ever been found responsible for a University of Florida Student Honor Code or Student Conduct Code violation?

- ☐ University of Florida Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution Office
- ☐ Faculty Discipline Committee or other university disciplinary body
- ☐ Neither of these apply to me

Explain your conviction or offense:

I certify my UF GPA is above a 3.0.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

BY SIGNING BELOW I CERTIFY THAT all information contained in this application is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand the University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Awards Committee maintains the right to verify any part of the information provided. Transcripts and GPA will not be published.

 **SIGN HERE**

clear

PHOTO, VIDEO AND TEXT RELEASE: I grant the University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences the right to use, publish and copy my image and materials (including but not limited to text from this application, photographs or videos) for educational programs, media relations and web sites.

×

SIGN HERE

clear

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