

Communications

Annual Report • 2023



UConn | COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Storytelling that Moves the Needle

UConn's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR) is vibrant, diverse, and impactful. CAHNR's Office of Communications works to reflect these qualities through news stories, videos, websites, and other channels. Our philosophy is simple: Tell compelling stories that elevate the CAHNR brand and support strategic priorities. In 2023, CAHNR Communications continued to ensure that amazing CAHNR stories reach as many audiences as possible and help shed light on the people, programs, and priorities that make UConn and the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources so special.

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After a reorganization initiated in 2021, CAHNR Communications continued to optimize operations in 2023 with a lean, but talented staff. Thanks to clearly defined areas of expertise and a firm understanding of the College's overarching goals and the departments' unique strengths, a broad range of research, education, and extension stories gained attention. Whether it's through a UConn Today article, a spot in local or national media, a social media post, or a new website: the CAHNR Communications team amplified the impact of many of the College's successes.

While leveraging the right channels was an important component of CAHNR Communications' strategy, the team's knowledge of resources available throughout the university to maximize our efforts allows us to do more with less. Strong partnerships with University Communications for news, design, and video support, as well as collaborations with the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and research centers like the Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy (InCHIP) allowed for the production of more CAHNR stories than ever before.

Coordinated Strategy Across Channels

Content strategy isn't just about telling a great story. It's critical to consider the appropriate channel to ensure that story reaches the audience who wants – or needs – to hear it most. In 2023, CAHNR Communications continued to refine our content strategy, focusing significantly on identifying the optimal channels to produce the most compelling stories possible.



The University of Connecticut’s official news site remains one of the most important owned channels for CAHNR Communications. By leveraging both the College’s dedicated page and the main homepage, which garner thousands of visits a day, views on stories that appeared on the CAHNR page increased by 26%. With a regular flow of articles, the UConn community is becoming more and more aware of the CAHNR brand, our strengths in research, the successes of our students and alumni, how we serve communities in our state, and more. Written for the general public, CAHNR stories also reach more residents in our state, potential industry partners, and members of Connecticut’s delegation – all of which are critical audiences, especially during the current budget climate.

Thanks to this strategy, in 2023, 188 stories were posted on CAHNR’s dedicated UConn Today page, and 134 of those also appeared on the site’s homepage. Views of CAHNR stories on UConn Today grew to almost 323,000, an increase of nearly 68,000 since last year. CAHNR researchers were included in the University’s top-performing story, “Connecticut and UConn are Leaders in Clean Energy and Sustainability,” with over 50,000 views.

Owned channels refer to platforms you control and “own,” such as an organization’s website or social accounts

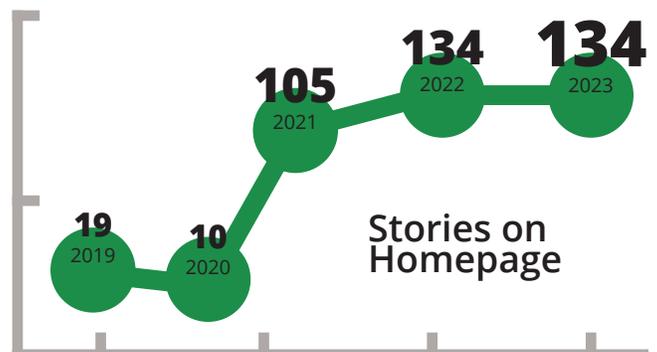
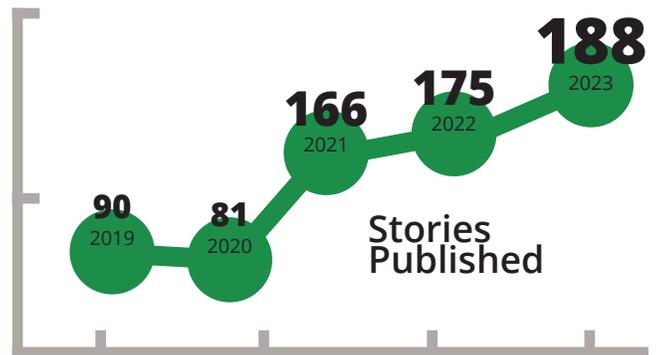
Performance

322,925

total views in 2023

There were **255,381** in 2022, **142,534** in 2021, **70,818** in 2020, and **128,303*** in 2019.

* UConn Today and CAHNR Newsroom combined data



UConn Today • Top 5 Stories of the Year

2023

#1 (50,859* views) Connecticut and UConn are Leaders in Clean Energy and Sustainability

2. (12,646) Finding Social Support Through Social Media During COVID Lockdowns
3. (6,131) Top of the Class: Student Develops Brown Butter Brickle Ice Cream for UConn Dairy Bar
4. (4,136) After Semester-Long Development, Student Created 'BrewConn' Beer Debuts with Glowing Reviews
5. (3,994) Five Faculty Named Highly Cited Researchers

2022

#1 (28,158 views) Statins Provide Protective Immune Benefits for Females, Nutritional Scientist Finds

2. (6,113) Swap, Don't Shop: Sustainable Fashion is Coming to UConn
3. (5,984) Finding Social Support Through Social Media During Lockdowns
4. (4,461) Five UConn Professors Named to World's Most Highly Cited Research List
5. (3,463) Researchers study challenges underrepresented STEM students face during COVID-19

2021

#1 (9,399 views) UConn Professor Advises Hallmark Channel Holiday Movie

2. (5,728) Six From UConn Named to World's Highly Cited Research List
3. (4,960) UConn Featured in Episode of New 'College Tour' Series' First Season
4. (3,102) Salty & Sweet: UConn Creamery Expands Production with New Line of Artisanal Cheeses
5. (3,081) Hitting the Trail in Connecticut Just Got Easier

2020

#1 (1,728 views) Campus Welcomes a New Garden to Foster Connection in Memory of the Late 'Swing Tree'

2. (1,659) Bury Christmas, And a Happy New Use: Repurposing Christmas Trees to Prevent Coastal Erosion
3. (1,291) River Herring, the Fish You Didn't Know You Needed
4. (850) Fish-food Entrepreneur Wins UConn's Wolff Startup Competition
5. (661) UConn Magazine: Eau de Herring

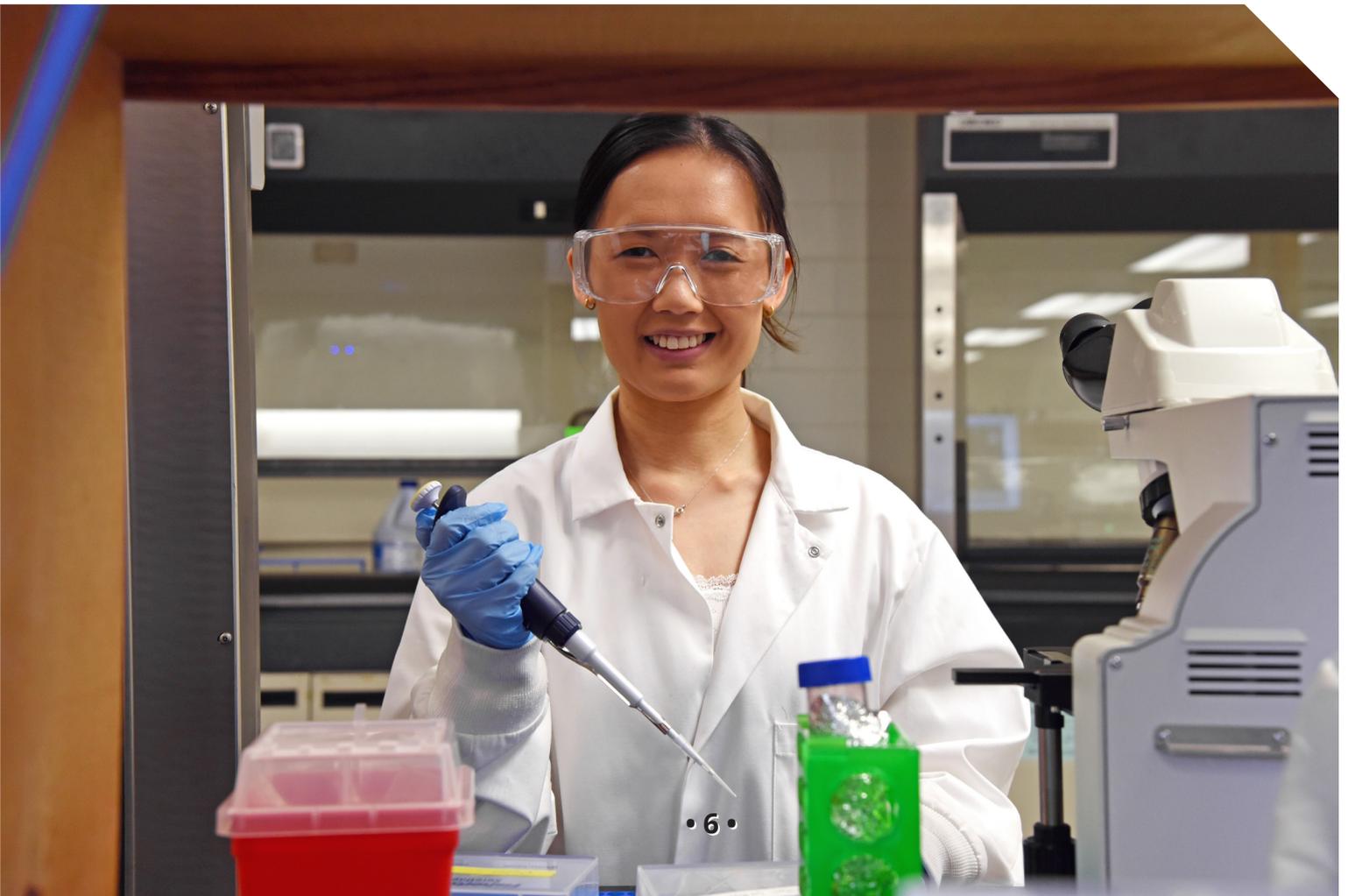
2019

#1 (16,016) Student Leader Wanjiku (Wawa) Gatheru Named UConn's First Rhodes Scholar**

2. (3,073**) Want to Thwart Climate Change? Here are 8 Steps You Can Take
3. (2,696**) Controlling Weeds on Playing Fields, Parks and Lawns Without Herbicides
4. (2,550**) UConn Collaborates on Gypsy Moth Cleanup
5. (2,138**) UConn Puts Seven On List Of World's Most Highly

Earned Media Strategy

Another key audience reached through UConn Today, pitches, and requests for experts is the local, national, and international media outlets who amplify CAHNR stories beyond our campus, state, and region. Working with media requires quick turnaround, flexibility, and partnership between CAHNR Communications, faculty and staff experts, and University Communications.



Earned Media

Since 2021, CAHNR Communications has prioritized taking advantage of these opportunities to expand the impact of our stories and highlight the unique expertise within all of CAHNR's departments. In 2023, CAHNR stories appeared in over 1,000 media outlets, including national and international publications like the New York Times, the Boston Globe, NPR, and the UK Independent. CAHNR faculty and staff appeared in many local outlets as well, like the Hartford Courant, Hearst Media CT, CT Public, and NBC-CT. Trade publications were also an important element of our earned media, with target placements in outlets like Feed Strategy, Greenhouse Management, and MedicalXpress.

Share of voice typically illustrates how well an organization stacks up to competitors by measuring total brand-generated coverage.

We have prioritized helping to train faculty, graduate students, and staff in media relations, which is often unfamiliar and sometimes stressful since it is not a standard component of their academic work. As more members of the CAHNR community feel comfortable sharing their expertise with the press, the public not only becomes more aware of the College's brand, but is more informed on important scientific, education, and extension topics, such as climate change, sustainable agriculture, and health. By sharing media hit reports with members of the Executive Council and the Strategic Communications Committee every few weeks, we are also ensuring leadership is aware of this important element of our share of voice and brand visibility and providing regular content for social channels, websites, and annual reports to alleviate administrative burden related to communications for departments/units.


1,011
earned media hits


25
TV appearances


2
media trainings hosted by
CAHNR Communications

Websites and Social Media

As the most important marketing tool available to any brand, websites continued to be a priority. CAHNR Communications channeled considerable energy into optimizing the College's digital presence through website redesign, creation, and maintenance. Web performance remained strong on the College's site, cahnr.uconn.edu (which includes UConn Extension content) and undergraduate.cahnr.uconn.edu. However, web activities went far beyond the oversight of the College site in 2023.

Emerging media. Moving target. Train wreck. All of these terms could be used to describe some social media platforms in 2023. Despite the chaos, CAHNR Communications continued to strategically leverage social media channels to reach specific audiences. From Instagram takeovers that highlight the student experience to peer-reviewed research innovations and videos showcasing everything from academic advisors to UConn Extension initiatives, all of CAHNR's successes have a place in our social media strategy.

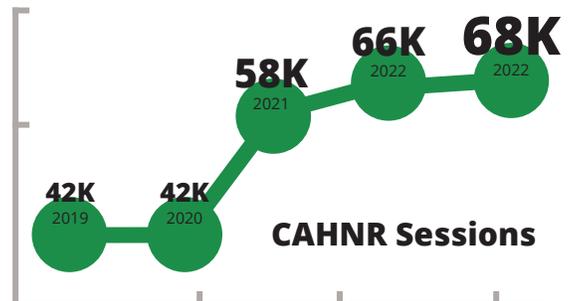
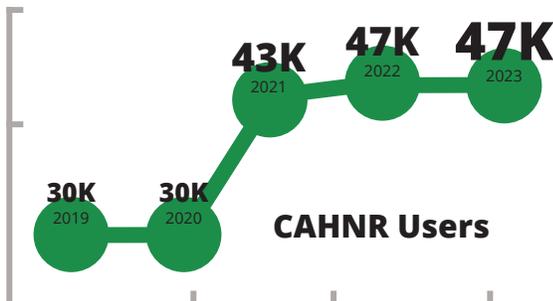
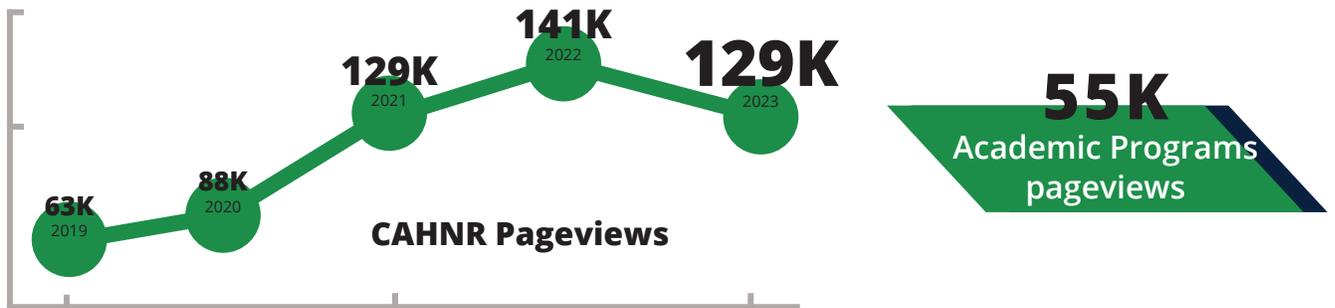


Websites

Following the milestone achievement in 2022 of retiring the outdated CAG server and moving all department/unit sites to the university-approved Aurora platform, there was a focus on fine-tuning across several sites and with behind-the-scenes activities that were critical for analytics and accessibility.

In 2023, CAHNR Communications oversaw the transition from Universal Analytics (UA) to GA4 in all CAHNR sites. Google sunset their longstanding data property, UA, in favor of GA4 “due to a constantly changing technology and regulatory ecosystem.” With guidance from University Communications’ digital marketing team, CAHNR Communications led this significant undertaking and provided resources for all CAHNR web managers that ensured site metrics would continue to be gathered without interruption when the official switch took place in July 2023.

Performance



Project Spotlight

The Allied Health Sciences site redesign was likely the largest and most complex undertaken in recent history. This project began in May 2023 and included not only a full visual redesign, but also a comprehensive content review and the integration of five separate sites into one domain. The project benefited from close collaboration with faculty and staff in the department. The site launched in September 2023 and features CAHNR branding, improved organization, and streamlined analytics.

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Department of Allied Health Sciences

Home About Undergraduate Graduate Research Community Alumni

SEARCH THIS SITE...

SUPPORT US IF

Launch Your Career with Allied Health Sciences

The Allied Health Sciences program at UConn prepares students for fulfilling careers in a variety of health care fields. With a degree in Allied Health Sciences, our graduates work in many diverse settings from hospitals and laboratories to research institutions and within communities. As part of an interdisciplinary team, our students help prevent, diagnose, treat, and educate patients to improve health and quality of life.

With programs at UConn Storrs and UConn Waterbury, allied health students gain a firm foundation with a focus on experiential learning, personalized advising, and a diverse curriculum. Whether the next step is graduate school or the workforce, we're excited to prepare our students for future success.

"Allied Health Sciences not only prepares you for the medical professions you expect, but also conceptual and educational paths. This pointed me toward global public health. - Iris Palencia '22"

CAREERS IN ALLIED HEALTH

There's an undergraduate program for you in Allied Health Sciences

ASK AN ADVISOR ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS

UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

We Are UConn Nation

Your connection with the Department of Allied Health Sciences doesn't end when you graduate. You're part of a network of alumni who want to help you succeed. Find out how to stay in touch and get engaged with the Department.

"I am proud of the research I conducted in AHS, which allowed me to learn so much from incredible faculty mentors and gain skills that will benefit me post-graduation. - Aliza Jeni-Worhagting '22"

Stay Connected.

Want to stay informed about the Department? Want to share your good news? Make sure to follow us on social, subscribe to our news feed, and reach out to let us know the cool things you're doing.

Follow on Social Subscribe to News Submit a Class Note

Attend an Event.

Whether you're in the neighborhood or across the globe, there are lots of opportunities to attend department-specific or general alumni events.

UPPER UCONN ALUMNI EVENTS

Undergraduate Programs

The Department of Allied Health Sciences offers students with a variety of options to tailor their studies to their career goals. The Allied Health Sciences major is open to students from their freshman year onward, subject to admissions criteria. The faculty and staff advisors in our dedicated Advising Center help students make informed decisions about their education and health career goals.

ASK AN ADVISING CENTER

"As a first-generation student, I knew I chose a major that would allow me to expand in my foundation of learning. - Jade Siquiera '24"

Allied Health Sciences Major & Concentrations

The Allied Health Sciences major is available to incoming freshmen and transfer students through UConn Admissions. Current UConn students in other majors can apply through a competitive admissions process. Majors list in the Standard Plan and can later declare their focus through the Advising Center.

STANDARD PLAN & CONCENTRATIONS ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

Undergraduate Professional Programs

Our professional programs are open to upper-level students through a competitive supplemental admissions process after completing the required prerequisites. If you see a profession or occupation and plan to apply to a professional program, we highly recommend that you declare an Allied Health Sciences major so that you can be advised within the Department and ensure that all prerequisites are met for your desired professional program.

Social Media

We continued to put the most effort into Instagram Reels, as well as content that generates engagement on LinkedIn. These platforms show the greatest return and are where the majority of our key audiences (prospective and current students, alumni, and external partners) are most active.

In addition to adapting our content strategy for tailored audience outreach, we also adapted to meet the changing social media landscape, which included almost monthly issues with X, the launch of their competitor, Threads, in July 2023, as well as declining use of Facebook with Gen Z and Millennials.



4,227
followers gained
since 2020



562,278
total reach in 2023



20,294
total engagement in 2023



Multimedia and Graphic Design

Much of our ability to execute our content strategy relies heavily on customized, professional photography and videography. Since 2019 and the reorganization that began in 2021, the CAHNR Communications team has captured thousands of moments used in websites, social media, news stories, and promotional materials. Each year, CAHNR Communications executes over 110 multimedia projects, most of which are also made available to the rest of the College for their use.

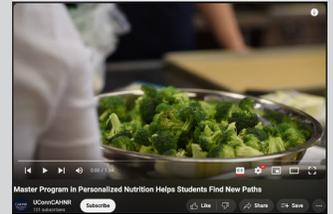
CAHNR Communications' multimedia specialist has continued to expand expertise, which has both improved the quality of photos and videos and enabled more projects to remain in-house. We are seeing the impact of this increased ownership and customization throughout CAHNR's suite of materials, such as the 2023 CAHNR Impacts magazine, web redesigns, UConn Today stories, and social media content.

CAHNR's graphic design needs run the gamut. Some are straightforward annual projects such as event programs and signage. Others require hundreds of person-hours, months of concepting, and many rounds of revision. Last year was no different, with over 40 design projects completed. This includes several collaborations with University Communications on highly visible promotional materials, such as 10th anniversary of health badges, new designs for UConn Creamery ice cream containers, illustrations of Jacobson Barn for multiple uses, and new UConn Extension wordmarks.



Project Spotlight

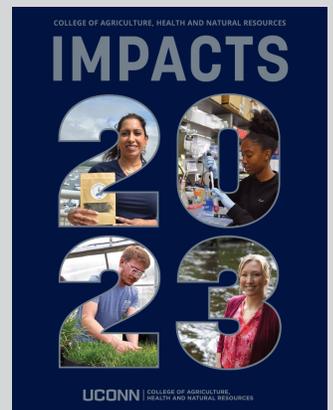
While most of our deliverables utilize photo and/or video, in 2023 we dedicated considerable resources to producing several program-specific videos that met strategic needs. In collaboration with the Department of Nutritional Sciences and UConn's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), we conceived of and produced a marketing video for the Master Program in Personalized Nutrition. The coordinated approach ensured that the end-product highlighted the most important elements of the program and allowed CETL to add content marketing to their existing course promotion. Since its release in March 2023, the video has been viewed 93,000 times, with significantly increased traffic to the course site managed by CETL.



Another program which was strategically selected for coverage was the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (CVMDL) within the Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science. We sought to raise awareness of several things with this video: the services provided to Connecticut through surveillance conducted at CVMDL, experiential learning opportunities available to students through the lab, and the pathobiology major in general. The video, which was paired with a UConn Today story that has been viewed over 650 times, connected these dots through the first-hand perspectives of two CVMDL student technicians.



The CAHNR Impacts magazine has become the largest graphic design project undertaken by CAHNR Communications. The 40-page report highlights the top stories in all of CAHNR's mission and strategic vision areas using brief, digestible articles and stunning photography. This year there was also a need to include more data related to CAHNR's research, academic, and Extension offerings, which expanded the scope from the previous year. Serving as the College's primary print marketing piece, CAHNR Impacts is used with external partners, state government, UConn administration, as well as all faculty and staff to recognize their important contributions to the College's success.



Advancement Communications

While collaboration between CAHNR Communications and the College's representatives from the UConn Foundation has increased since 2019, 2023 marked an even greater coordination and partnership. The Advancement team, which also includes other members of the Dean's Office, such as the Dean's Assistant and Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration, worked together in 2023 to advance several projects and priorities with key stakeholders, alumni, donors, and industry partners.

Collaborative Projects:

- Alumni newsletters, including CAHNR Quarterly and department-specific materials
- Plant & Soil Health Center website and marketing materials
- UConn Gives support for CAHNR teams
- 10th Anniversary of Health planning/branding
- Alumni profiles
- Foundation campaign planning



Internal Communications

CAHNR is large, academically diverse, and extends to many locations around Connecticut. To help keep all members of the College feeling engaged, informed, and recognized, CAHNR Communications launched a monthly internal newsletter in August 2022. In its first full year of distribution, the CAHNR Faculty & Staff Newsletter was viewed almost 3,000 times.

Beyond the performance metrics, having this monthly touchpoint with all CAHNR faculty and staff, regardless of department or campus, provides a space to share successes that might not otherwise be elevated to another channel like social media or UConn Today. Through the newsletter, we strive to broaden understanding of CAHNR units, connect people who may not otherwise have that opportunity, share lesser-known UConn or CAHNR history, photos from internal events, and occasional silly dad jokes.



Looking Forward

With operations and responsibilities fully established, CAHNR Communications will seek to provide the same or better levels of general support to the College and its units in the areas described above. We will also seek to focus special energy on several initiatives, including:

- **Student Recruitment:** Several CAHNR departments would benefit from customized support to recruit students to their programs. As such, CAHNR Communications, Alumni Relations, and the Office of Academic Programs are offering support that bolsters existing departmental efforts. This could include developing marketing materials, launching or improving social media channels, email marketing guidance, etc.
- **10th Anniversary of Health:** To highlight CAHNR's strengths related to human health sciences, our content strategy includes stories, events, and posts leveraging the 10th anniversary badge developed in collaboration with University Communications. Jointly executed with Alumni Relations, this initiative's primary goal is also to increase affinity with CAHNR amongst health sciences alums, some of whom were part of different schools/colleges during their time at UConn.
- **Optimizing Digital Presence:** CAHNR Communications will continue to work with departments, programs, and research labs to improve their web presence from user interface and user experience perspectives. Priority will be given to CAHNR departments and highly visible centers, like the Korey Stringer Institute. CAHNR Communications' web designer has also developed a more streamlined process for developing program and research lab sites, which will reduce the time needed to launch a site. Ensuring quality analytics across CAHNR's suite of sites will also remain a priority.
- **UConn Extension Branding:** While efforts to elevate the UConn Extension brand have been ongoing for many years, a team comprised of CAHNR Communications, UConn Extension, and University Communications worked together to develop simplified wordmarks in December 2023. In 2024, CAHNR Communications will continue to work with UConn Extension leadership to determine and outline the standard operating procedures for implementation to strengthen external awareness and maintain strong brand affiliation between CAHNR and UConn Extension.



UConn

**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
HEALTH AND NATURAL
RESOURCES**

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

communications.cahnr.uconn.edu

CAHNRComm@uconn.edu

27 Manter Rd., Unit 4035
Storrs, CT 06269-4035