



Office of **Communications**

2022 Annual Report

CAHNR Communications **Telling CAHNR's Story. Strategically.**

In 2022, CAHNR Communications continued to shine a light on the College's many successes. With strategies and workflows established in 2021, the team expanded efforts and performance in all areas of communications and marketing, such as branding, news coverage, multimedia production, graphic and web design, and social media. The result is that more internal and external stakeholders heard CAHNR's story and gained awareness of our strengths.

CAHNR's audiences are diverse, as are the topics explored in our research, teaching, and extension outreach. From traditional agriculture to innovations in human health, and economic analysis, CAHNR faculty and staff cover a lot of ground. Our content strategy aims to keep pace. We focus on engaging these diverse audiences about the multitude of topics in ways that connect with their interests on platforms they use. Our extensive and comprehensive knowledge of potential channels, target audience, and best practices allows CAHNR Communications to focus energy on impactful content that resonates.

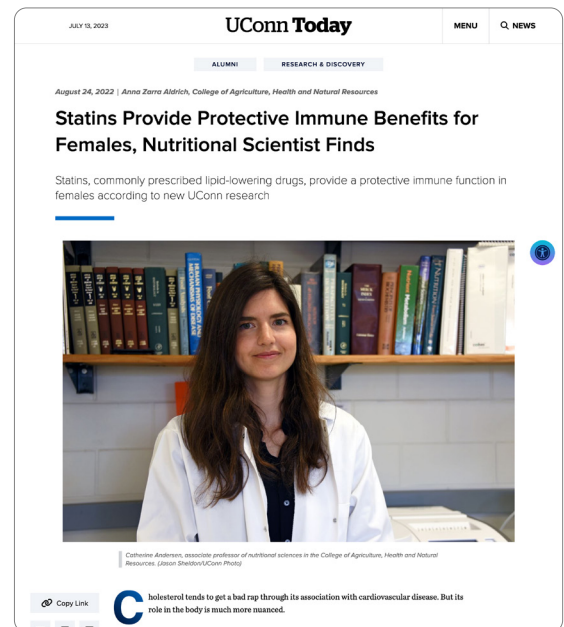
Annual Report **Contents**

- UConn Today
- Websites
- Social Media
- Advancement
- Services
- Looking Forward

UConn Today

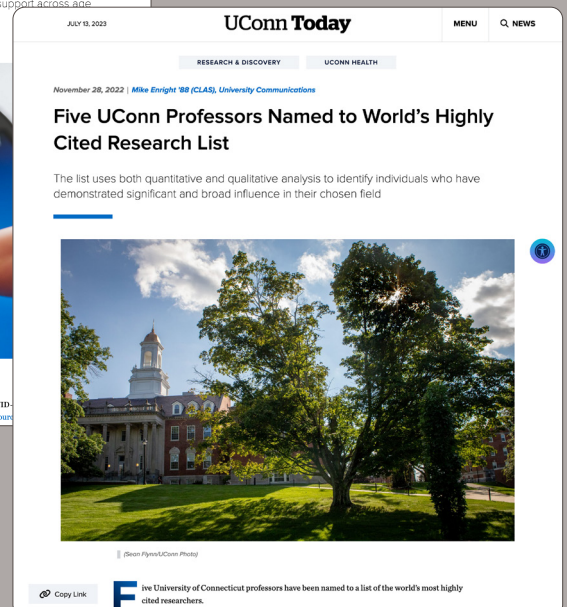
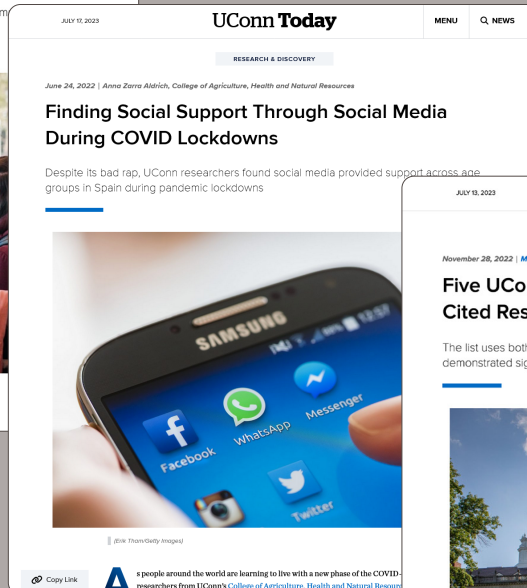
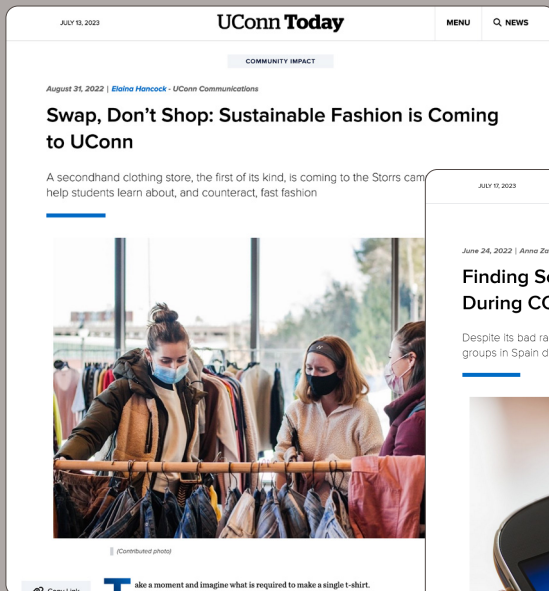
In many ways, CAHNR has historically been one of UConn's "best kept secrets." Now CAHNR stories are getting the attention they deserve by taking advantage of high-traffic channels such as UConn Today. We are also putting greater focus on "above the fold" stories with priority positions on the homepage to maximize views. By aligning stories with our content strategy, every story helps to raise awareness of CAHNR's strengths in research, education, and extension, as well as the College's progress related to the implementation of our strategic vision.

Thanks to this strategy, in 2022, 175 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 also grew to **over 255,000**, an increase of nearly 113,000 since last year. CAHNR's top story was the 5th most read across the university (including UConn Health), with 28,158 views. This list includes university-wide announcements like the naming of a new UConn president, launching UConn's streaming channel UConn+, and UConn's record-setting pool of applicants.



The most viewed story on CAHNR's UConn Today feed. **(28,158 views)**

After two years of significant growth, we'll look to maintain this level of success in the coming year. We'll continue to focus production on topics of interest to the general public to maximize awareness beyond our College, such as peer-reviewed publications, technology commercialization and entrepreneurship, and new initiatives. We'll also continue to prioritize stories that target the CAHNR community specifically to ensure our captured audiences continue to be aware and engaged with the College.



More top view earners on UConn Today:

Left - (6,113 views)

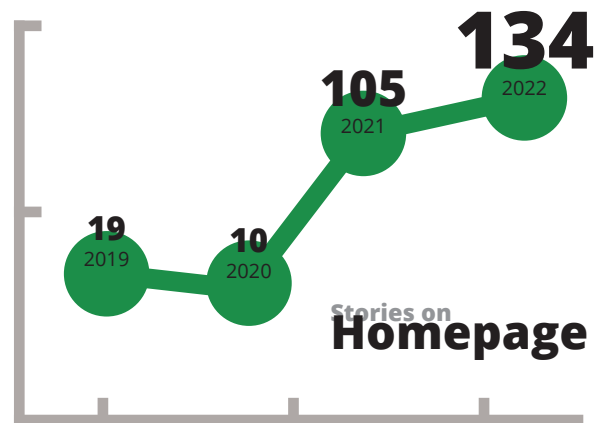
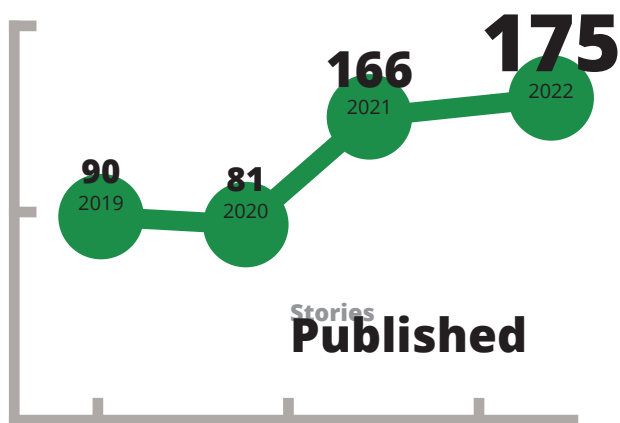
Middle - (5,984 views)

Right - (4,461 views)

255,381

total views in 2022

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



* UConn Today and CAHNR Newsroom combined data



Top 5 Stories 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

Top 5 Stories 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

Top 5 Stories 2020

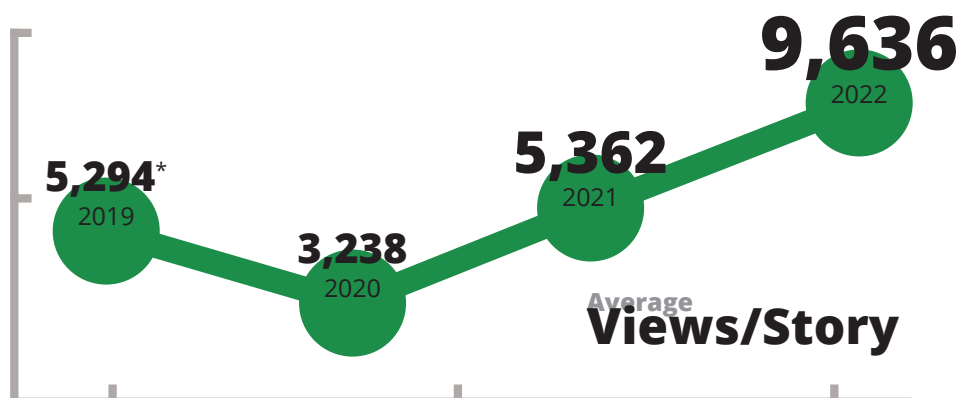
#1 (1,728 views) Campus Welcomes a New Garden to Foster Connection in Memory of the Late 'Swing Tree'

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

Top 5 Stories 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



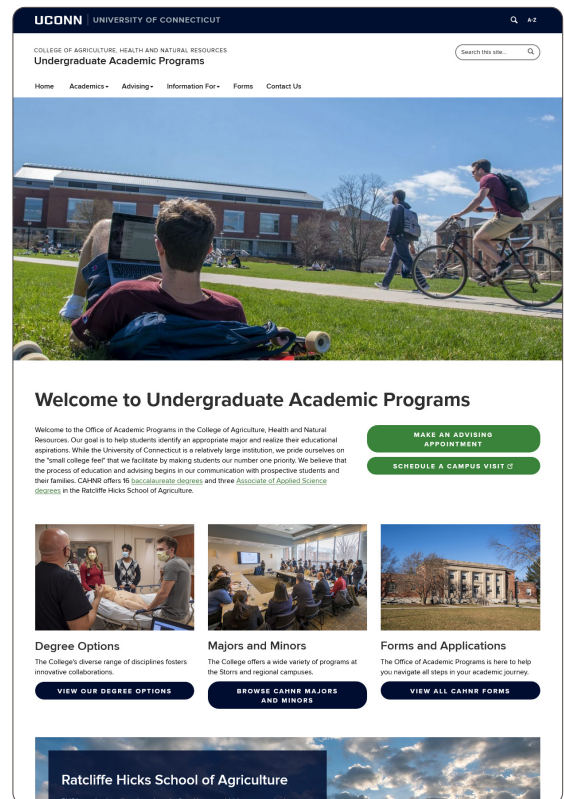
* UConn Today and CAHNR Newsroom combined data

Design & Development Websites

In CAHNR Communications, we often remind clients that their website is their front door. As a College, we need to put our best foot forward with every site we create or maintain. In 2022, CAHNR Communications worked on several large-scale, highly visible sites including the Office of Academic Programs and several department sites. We also developed new pages for the CAHNR site, which highlight and validate the work being done as part of the Strategic Vision Implementation Committees for an external audience.

While our team directly oversees maintenance and optimization for cahnr.uconn.edu, we also collaborate with any unit web managers within CAHNR to support the success of their respective sites. This support ranges from full redesign directly managed by CAHNR Communications to routine help desk-type assistance.

In 2022, we also celebrated a significant achievement: retiring the outdated custom server which had previously hosted most CAHNR sites. This activity took several years and was a complex process to ensure that client needs, web best practices, and University policy were met. This process also eliminates considerable security risks, and involved constant contact with the UConn ITS Information Security Office.

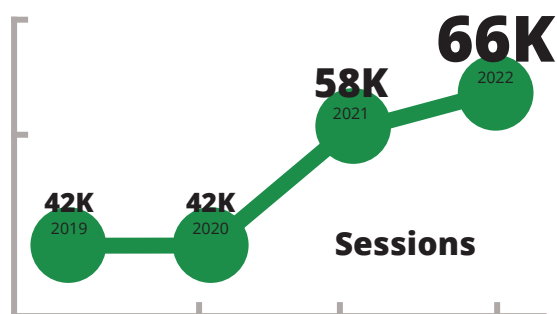
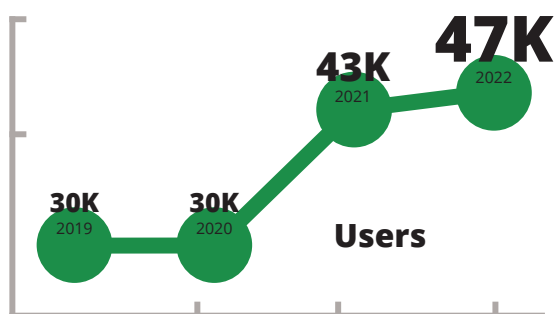
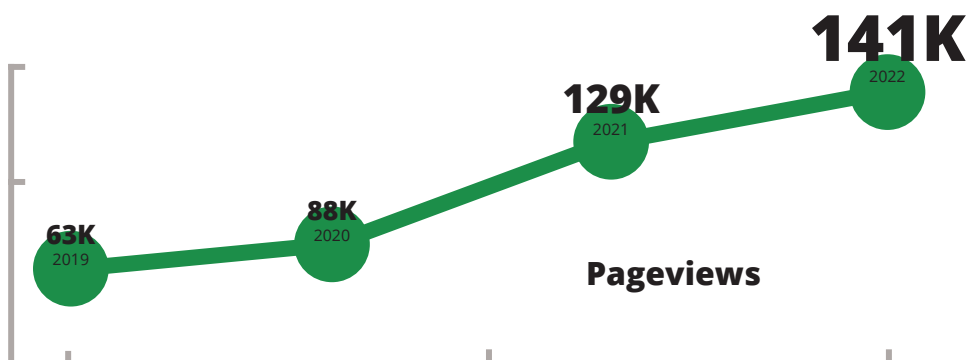


Undergraduate Academic Programs website (undergraduate.cahnr.uconn.edu)

Other major launches included:

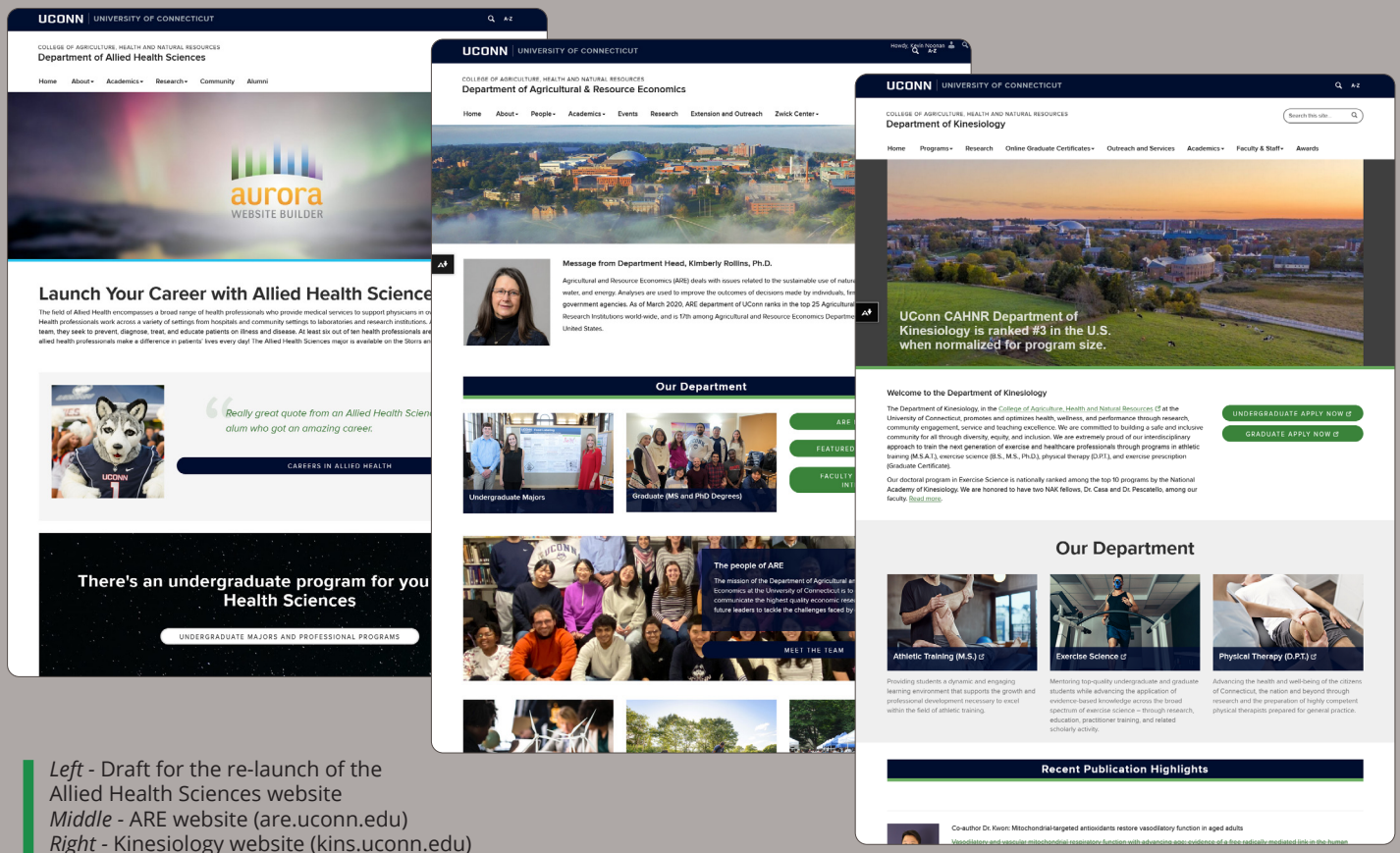
- Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture
- Department of Animal Science
- Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture
- Research grants (proposal support)
- Home and Garden Education Center

Performance



Goals for 2023

With the retirement of the custom server, we will now shift gears to redesigning high-level sites that either don't align with CAHNR brand guidelines and/or would benefit from the support of a professional communications team. As departments and programs evolve, so do websites. This process of evolution can be challenging to navigate without expert support and knowledgeable project management. Our primary focus will be on sites with significant external traffic such as Allied Health Sciences, Kinesiology, Agricultural and Resource Economics, and the Korey Stringer Institute.



Left - Draft for the re-launch of the Allied Health Sciences website
Middle - ARE website (are.uconn.edu)
Right - Kinesiology website (kins.uconn.edu)

CAHNR

Social Media

As social media platforms and CAHNR audiences evolve, we continue to adapt our strategy. While CAHNR's following has grown across platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter), two have emerged as the most strategically valuable.

Instagram and LinkedIn garner the most engagement of the four CAHNR accounts, since they are most used by prospective and current students, recent alumni, and members of the business community. While we see significant overlap in audiences, the type of content that wins attention is very different.

On LinkedIn, we continue to grow our following by engaging with recent alumni and professionals whose interests align with CAHNR strengths. We know our content resonates with this audience, since engagement increased 85% over the last year (2,863 as compared to 1,540 in 2021). This account is still new, and we anticipate it will continue to build momentum as the audience grows.

We have invested significant energy in multimedia production for social and have incorporated Reels into our Instagram strategy. With the explosion of TikTok, Instagram's algorithm prioritized video content. In 2022, CAHNR Communications produced 19 Reels, with plans for optimized and increased production in 2023.



2,832

followers gained since 2020



425,343

total reach in 2022



16,291

total engagement in 2022

CAHNR

Social Media

Goals for 2023

In 2023, we'll continue to optimize our social media content strategy to adapt and evolve with the platforms and our audiences. We'll also continue to improve our workflow, with better alignment of our multimedia and social media production. We'll also improve how we take advantage of user-generated content and content developed by CAHNR Ambassadors and CAHNR Communications student workers to ensure we continue to produce content that will resonate with Gen Z audiences.



CAHNR Alumni Advancement

CAHNR Communications continued to collaborate closely with our representatives from the UConn Foundation focused on development and alumni relations. Coordinated advancement activities allow for a synergistic approach to our content strategy and ensure that deliverables support efforts to engage alumni, recognize donors, and highlight CAHNR's strengths in opportunity areas. While there is regular interaction between members of the advancement team, two main initiatives underscore our collaborative, coordinated approach: the annual UConn Gives crowdfunding campaign and development of CAHNR Quarterly, the College's alumni and friends newsletter.

CAHNR Quarterly allows the College to engage with all of our graduates, including those from the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture, comprising approximately 14,000 recipients. The newsletter is designed to be skimmed, allowing awareness-building to take place "on the go." Last year, we optimized several aspects of this engagement mailing and saw improved performance as a result:

- Streamlined schedule to reduce potential overlap/oversending
- Increased total open rate to 36% (industry average 23%), which represents a 17% growth over last year
- Improved consistency of sends and data capture with UConn Foundation marcomms team
- Maintained consistently low unsubscribe rate of 0.1%



CAHNR Quarterly email newsletter,
September 2022

CAHNR

Advancement

UConn Gives

The University's flagship fundraising event, UConn Gives, was another area of focus for our team. As in years past, CAHNR Communications provided extraordinary support for participating units. This included infosessions, the development of training resources, a robust strategic content plan at the college level to ensure maximum visibility for CAHNR projects, and development of creative content for the campaigns such as project videos, emails, and social posts. As in previous cycles, CAHNR teams excelled during the campaign.



CAHNR

Advancement

Goals for 2023

In addition to maintaining the above activities, we will seek to develop and implement enhanced web presence for alumni engagement on departmental sites. In coordination with CAHNR's alumni relations officer, we'll create dedicated alumni pages that allow for both promotion of career opportunities for current students and an environment for outreach to alumni that encourages active participation, connections, and networking. We'll also provide communications and marketing expertise for strategic events and promotional initiatives that further the College's advancement goals such as the Jones Annex renovation project.



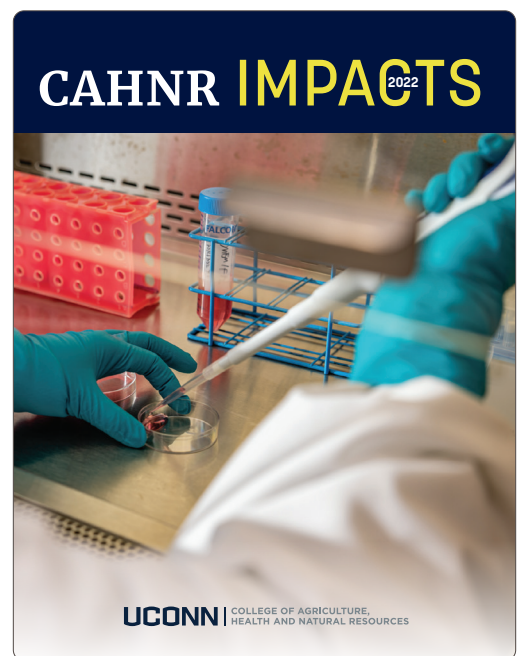
Services to

Support Success

Graphic Design

In 2022, CAHNR Communications oversaw the design and bid process for several graphic design projects to promote specific programs and the College's overall impact around the state. We focused energy on creating print materials that serve many members of the College, and that will engage with target audiences such as prospective students. We also responded to a specific need for a college-level annual magazine coordinated with internal reports, statutory requirements, and existing magazines for UConn Extension and CAHNR's research office. Other deliverables include:

- Student-centered viewbook to support recruitment activities at the college level
- Annual reports for UConn leadership, Dean's advisory board, and Governor's office/state legislature
- Event materials (Scholars' Celebration, Awards & Honors, admitted student open houses, etc.)



CAHNR Impacts magazine

Services to

Support Success

Multimedia

Over the course of 2022, CAHNR Communications' multimedia team was there to capture special moments like the Women's Basketball team taking riding lessons, visits from elected officials and alumni, and 2022 Commencement ceremonies. We also worked throughout the year to highlight the College's strengths through professional photography and video for a variety of use cases, like social media, UConn Today, and paid marketing. With the improved quality and quantity of CAHNR photos, we eliminated the need for third-party vendors at many events and produced high-quality photos for use in externally facing print projects such as CAHNR Impacts, a new annual magazine focused on CAHNR's research, teaching, and extension innovations. Photos from the CAHNR Communications team are available to all CAHNR faculty, staff, and students through the University Media Share.

100+

photo and
video shoots
in 2022

Services to

Support Success

Internal Communications

Given CAHNR's size and geographic spread around the state, we sought to improve internal communications with several specific initiatives. In August 2022, we developed and launched an internal monthly newsletter that is shared with all members of CAHNR's faculty and staff. The newsletter aimed to not only increase awareness between CAHNR faculty and staff of College happenings, but also build morale, educate on programs and services, and recognize success among colleagues.

CAHNR Communications

Looking Forward

The College now has an established, active, and trusted hub for strategic communications and marketing support through CAHNR's Office of Communications. In the next year, we'll prioritize maintaining, optimizing, and adapting these activities as needs, platforms, and goals shift. We will continue to effectively and impactfully beat the CAHNR drum and strengthen the CAHNR brand.

At the same time, we will also prioritize strategic activities that help the College grow and meet specific needs. An improved workflow between CAHNR Communications and departments will provide added support and improved coordination, once resources allow for the addition of a new FTE in the CAHNR Communications team. With additional involvement and oversight of department activities, CAHNR Communications will ensure optimized and accurate digital presence, effective use of funds for marketing, and engaging content creation. While all departments individually and CAHNR writ large will benefit from this approach, it will also serve to provide targeted support for departments with specific student recruitment needs.

2023 Priorities

Interdepartmental
workflow

Targeted student
recruitment

Optimized digital
presence



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

communications.cahnر.uconn.edu

CAHNRComm@uconn.edu

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