



WSU students graduate STEM strong for today's ag

Growing up amid the high-tech industries of Puget Sound, Makayla Raap felt the call of her family's agricultural roots.

When it came time to choose a college path, Raap followed her interests in ag, science and technology to Washington State University, joining an interdisciplinary program that broadens graduates' skills in STEM.

Short for "Science, Technology, Engineering and Math," STEM is increasingly important to feed our modern world.

"A lot of people don't realize it, but STEM is a big part of agriculture," Raap said.

From plant breeding to the systems that sustainably grow, harvest and market crops, America's 22-million-person-strong agricultural backbone depends on science, data and technology.

"As agriculture changes, the need keeps growing for employees that understand the science and engineering that support new technologies like genetic engineering, robotics and artificial intelligence," said Drew Lyon, interim chair of WSU's Department of Crop and Soil Sciences.

"Regionally and nationally, there's demand for graduates who are grounded in the fundamentals of modern agriculture, and adaptable to the new technologies that are rapidly enhancing productivity and efficiency," said Tadd Wheeler, lead instructor in Raap's major — Agricultural Technology and Production Management



For Jordan Culpepper, STEM means the biochemistry and microbiology studies that help her understand what's happening in Washington vineyards and wine cellars.

(AgTM), part of WSU's Agricultural and Food Systems (AFS) program.

One of several cross-disciplinary programs encompassing nearly a dozen majors within WSU's College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences, AFS prepares graduates for careers in the food system, economics, organic and sustainable agriculture, and ag education: from farm operators and entrepreneurs to research and computer scientists, environmental specialists, analysts, accountants, human resource professionals and marketers.

Job placement is very strong for WSU STEM graduates, with many career fields having more open positions than candidates to fill them.

"We need to increase food production by 70% to feed a growing global population, so there are lots of opportunities for innovation," said Holly Henning, WSU's Swantz Distinguished Professor of Teaching and Learning. "AFS teaches scientific reasoning, communication and systems thinking to help our students to understand the many systems that impact our ability to feed the future."

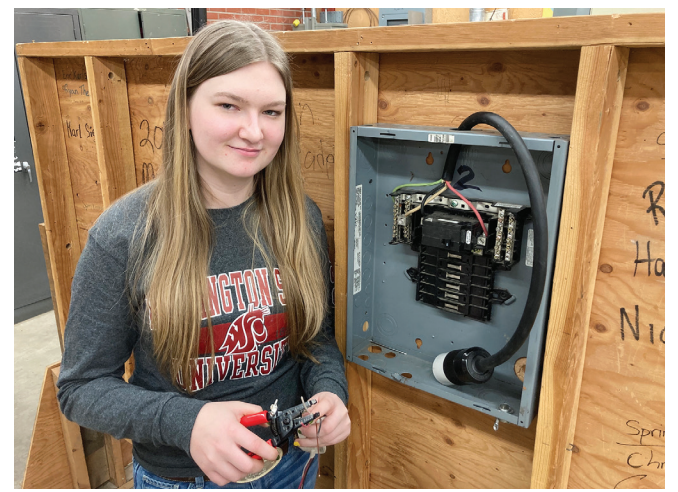
For senior Jordan Culpepper, STEM means the biochemistry and microbiology studies that help her understand what's happening in Washington vineyards and wine cellars.

"I learned the nitty-gritty of winemaking, everything from basic to really complex chemistry," she said.

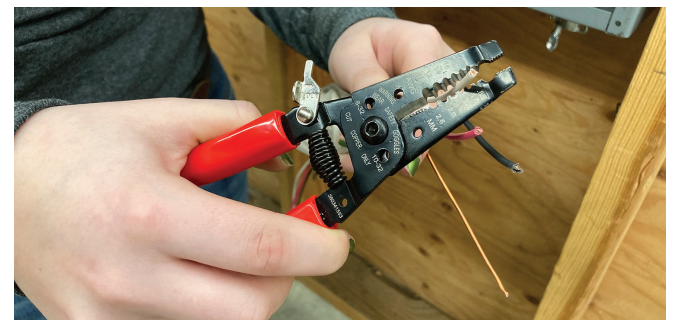
Graduating this spring with a degree in Viticulture & Enology, Culpepper will spend the summer studying wildfire smoke's effects on wine, then join a Northwest winery to undertake cellar responsibilities.

In AgTM, Raap researched a new technology in every one of her classes. She has learned how to run a farm business, build and repair hydraulic systems, and wire a building for electricity. This summer, she jumps feet first into a data analytics internship on her way to a STEM career.

"My dad is so proud of me," she said. To learn more about agriculture and STEM education at the Future CAHNRS Cougs website at cahnrs.wsu.edu.



Makayla Raap is majoring in Agricultural Technology and Production Management at Washington State University.



Electrical wiring is among the many skills offered in the STEM program at WSU.



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Proactive Financial Planning

by L. Jake Carpenter, VP Investor Relations

We are in the midst of some very unusual times. For starters, Russia is warring with Ukraine, gas prices are at an all-time high, supply chain issues continue to haunt us, inflation is pushing up at an alarming rate, and to top it all off, there is a significant amount of market volatility. I'm not here with a message of doom and gloom; the fact is we have seen this before in some form or another. Let's remember that with every challenge comes opportunity!

It's important to be proactive in your financial planning. You need a strategy, tailored to your unique situation, that will navigate a turbulent economic environment. If you're uncertain about where to start, I'm here to partner with you and walk you through a proactive process that will help answer your questions and concerns.

Chances are, you are still actively managing the financial instruments that generate your income. For example, you may be running a farm, managing rental properties, running a business, or all the above! One important element of a proactive financial plan is the strategic positioning of your financial assets. You need to be able to reposition your assets to create a passive income stream when you reach retirement.

For example, if your farm is worth \$5,000,000 you need to get that \$5,000,000 into a position to provide passive income. If your business is worth \$2,000,000 then you must figure out how to reposition that \$2,000,000 into a place where it can provide growth. If your rental portfolio is worth \$3,000,000 you must figure out how to reposition it to provide tax advantages. And you must do all of this while minimizing your risk.

Proper planning is important when it comes to repositioning those assets. First, you may need to find a buyer for your business, farm, or rental portfolio. This takes time and may have challenges. Your plan will need to address how to manage the capital gains tax that results from the sale. A 1031 exchange is not appropriate in this situation because it requires the purchase of "like-kind" property. You already know that you want to get away from managing a farm or rental property and create passive income. So, you will need to consider something other than a 1031 exchange to address the capital gains tax.

The good news is, that there are alternatives to using a 1031 exchange. One strategy you might consider is an Installment Sales Trust. The Installment Sales Trust allows you to sell a business, farm, rental property, and or other highly appreciated asset and recapture the capital gains tax to create more income and growth for you and your family to enjoy. An Installment Sales Trust is a specialized trust that is set up and initiated by a team of professionals.

Once the capital gains are recaptured within the trust, a financial advisor will work with you to reposition those assets to create the safety, income, and growth you need. If you choose to reach out to Equilus Capital Partners, we'll work with you to ensure that all of your assets are working together to address issues like market volatility, inflation, and taxes.

We're the educators; you are the decision-maker. It is time to make better decisions by knowing all of your options!

Call to learn more. (509)665-8349.

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