



Laura Folts

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B.S. – Food Science, 2005; UW-Madison
M.S. – Food Science, in progress at UM-Twin Cities

“Don’t live in a bubble. Get involved while you are in school and beyond. Not only does it look great on a resume, but it helps you explore what’s out there.”

- Laura Folts

Like many undergraduates, Laura Folts came to college undecided about what her major would be. An introductory food science class sparked her interest in the subject and she soon enrolled in the program. While courses like Food Chemistry helped prepare Laura for her future career, extracurricular activities and professional experiences opened doors to valuable opportunities, including a job after she received her bachelor’s degree.

While an undergraduate, Laura participated in the UW-Madison Food Science Club’s Product Development Team, which won a national title for its granola breakfast product, “Healthy sTarts.” Through this work, she gained an interest in the sensory aspects of product development.

“There isn’t a specific sensory class in the UW Food Science department,” Laura explains, “It was my work on the Product Development Team that helped build my knowledge in that area.”

After graduation, Laura took an internship at the Kellogg Corporation in Battle Creek, Michigan. She had learned about the position at Kellogg through a corporate speaker at a Food Science Club meeting and was selected through CALS’s on-campus interview process. During her 15 months with Kellogg, she worked in the Sensory and Shelf Life Department evaluating international and frozen food products, such as Special K cereal and Morningstar Farms frozen foods.

“As an intern, I was involved in every aspect of product testing,” says Laura. “I worked directly under the sensory scientists in my departments, both organizing and conducting sensory panels.”

After her internship was completed, Laura decided to pursue graduate work in Food Science at the University of Minnesota, with an emphasis on sensory analysis. “My job at Kellogg made me realize what I wanted to major in,” she says.

Her experience at Kellogg also helped her secure a job as the coordinator of the Sensory Center on the UM campus. In this position, she coordinates sensory testing for graduate students conducting food research on campus and for private companies across the country. Unlike many graduate students who just pursue their coursework and research, Laura is gaining even more professional experience while in school.

As for the future, Laura plans to finish her graduate studies and then work for the sensory department of a food company, perhaps even returning to Kellogg.

Laura encourages students to explore their possibilities and get involved in activities to help determine where their interests lie. “I knew that I couldn’t go straight to graduate school,” says Laura. “It was my experiences at Kellogg that helped me focus on what I wanted to do with my career.”