Christina Wormald is working on her master's degree in food science, a major she fell in love with as an undergraduate at UMass Amherst. After working in two research labs, she decided to pursue a graduate degree in the same field. "My experience doing research made me passionate about science. I feel so lucky that I get to be a part of important work like improving food safety for people around the world."

Graduate students like Christina are critical to the research that takes place at the College of Natural Sciences. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many graduate students have lost the opportunities they had previously to spend much-needed time in labs or out in the field.

"Our graduate students are the lifeblood of our research and our industry partnerships. They make science happen." -Dean Tricia Serio

Their financial and career security is also threatened as fellowships and internships have disappeared. Prior to the pandemic, Christina had a summer internship lined up but the position was cut by the company. "Summer is my time to work and make money to live on for the rest of the year. But it's just as challenging to not have a space to do our work or a lab team to partner with on projects. We need access to places and people."

UMass Amherst is developing ways to support graduate students so they can continue their efforts to make this world a better place for all. To find out how you can help, email cnsadvancement@umass.edu.