Greetings. This month we have had the pleasure of meeting a number of people who have applied for faculty positions at the new College of Veterinary Medicine here at Western University. Our letter of advertisement in the April 1 and April 15 issues of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association and recruitment efforts brought in 67 applications. We expect to hire faculty members over the next few years for positions in Anatomy, Microanatomy/Embryology, Physiology/Biochemistry, Pharmacology/Toxicology, Biomedical Ethics, Pathology, Microbiology, Parasitology, Immunology, Public Health/Epidemiology, Large Animal Medicine, Large Animal Surgery, Small Animal Medicine, Small Animal Surgery, Anesthesiology/Critical Care, Radiology, and Reproduction.

I am pleased to report that we have interviewed excellent, interesting and diverse candidates in almost all of these disciplines, from all over North America. Nearly all candidates are veterinarians with an advanced degree and/or specialty board certification. We have interviewed three groups of prospective faculty and expect to interview a fourth group in July before extending offers. We have constructed the interview itinerary to include a presentation on the college development plan approved by AVMA Council on Education, teaching presentations, information sessions on employee benefits and campus resources, a small group assignment, individual interviews and tours of the campus, the Inland Valley Humane Society, Cal Poly Pomona and the surrounding dairy shed. Some candidates also have participated in realtor tours of the area.

We are looking for three kinds of excellence in the faculty we hire. First, we expect competence in the candidates’ areas of discipline. Second, we are looking for faculty that will commit to implementing our curriculum in the spirit of our three founding principles: (I) commitment to innovative, student centered learning, (II) commitment to Reverence for Life, and (III) commitment to strategic partnerships and alliances in veterinary medicine. Finally, we are looking for tolerant, open-minded, team-oriented faculty who can listen, who are willing to learn new ways of educating, who can disagree without being disagreeable, and who will argue issues passionately and then come together and compromise for the common good and common vision. A tall order, but these are the traits that we are finding in the people we are meeting. In the next newsletter I look forward to introducing you to our first faculty hires.

-- Shirley D. Johnston, DVM, PhD
Dr. Wayne R Bidlack, dean of Cal Poly Pomona’s College of Agriculture was selected as one of five recipients of this year’s California State University (CSU) Wang Family Excellence Awards.

Dr. Bidlack is Cal Poly Pomona’s fourth Wang Award recipient. Dr. Aubrey Fine, faculty coordinator of Cal Poly’s Center for Leadership & Service Learning and longtime professor in the College of Education & Integrative Studies, was a 2001 honoree. Dr. Steven Wickler, director of both the Equine Research Center and the campus laboratory animal facility, university veterinarian, associate director of Equine Sciences and professor of Animal and Veterinary Sciences, was selected in 2000. And Dr. Vernon Stauble, chair of the Cal Poly’s International Business & Marketing Department, was one of the award’s inaugural recipients in 1999. Established by CSU Trustee Stanley Wang, these annual awards recognize five faculty members/administrators from among the 23 CSU campuses who, through exceptional commitment and dedication, have distinguished themselves by exemplary contributions and achievements.

During his tenure, the College of Agriculture has enjoyed remarkable growth. Over 30 percent more degrees have been granted, the number of majors offered has increased 8 percent, the number of full-time students has increased 25 percent and the number of full-time faculty has increased 31 percent. In addition, research funding has expanded from $500,000 in 1995 to $3.75 million in 2001, highlighting Dr. Bidlack’s facilitation with new faculty and National Institute of Health and U.S. Department of Agriculture funding. His assistance has also helped secure outside funding from the Agricultural Research Initiative and private sources to remodel campus laboratories.

Under his leadership, the College of Agriculture has established numerous centers of excellence at Cal Poly Pomona. The most recent of these is AGRIsBeces, a 40-acre diversified research, education and demonstration center promoting agricultural and environmental understanding. AGRIsBeces has also expanded the Arabian Horse Center and provided development of the Human Nutrition Research Laboratory and the Center for Seed Technology and Genomics.

Several key program innovations have been instituted under Bidlack’s direction, including a collaborative relationship with the College of Veterinary Medicine at Western University of Health Sciences, the creation of the Apparel Merchandising and Management Department, adding a Food Marketing emphasis in the Agribusiness Management Department and a proposed new major in Animal Health Science. Dr. Bidlack is currently an active member of Western University’s CVM Advisory Council.

Born in Waverly, N.Y., Dr. Bidlack received his undergraduate degree in Dairy Science and Technology from Penn State University in 1966. He later completed a master’s degree in Food Science and Technology at Iowa State University (1968) and a Doctoral degree in Biochemistry at the University of California, Davis (1972). A postdoctoral fellow at the University of Southern California School of Medic from 1972-74, Dr. Bidlack received his academic appointment at USC in 1974, where he later served as assistant dean of Medical Student A1 and professor and interim chair of Pharmacology and Nutrition. Between 1992-95, he worked at Iowa State where he served as chair and professor of Food Science and Human Nutrition and as director of the Center for Designing Foods to Improve Nutrition. In the area of research, Dr. Bidlack’s recent focus has involved the development of value-added food products, functional modification of proteins, the evaluation of biologically active food components (plant and animal) and the use of agriculture commodities for non-food industrial uses.
The March 19, 2002 Groundbreaking Celebration for the College of Veterinary Medicine brought many special guests to campus. The event included a VIP breakfast with remarks and book signings by Dr. Marty Becker, author of *Chicken Soup for the Dog Lover’s Soul* and *Healing Power of Pets*, and later the groundbreaking ceremony with participants Dr. James Brandt, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association and Dr. Jon Peek, president of the California Veterinary Medical Association. Dr. Carl Osborne provided a veterinary continuing education program, “What’s New in ’02: Idiopathic Feline Cystitis.” Service dogs and handlers that were honored in Dr. Becker’s *Healing Power of Pets* were on hand to celebrate, including a burn victim dog who now works in animal assisted therapy with human burn patients. The Snip and Chip Foundation from Phoenix, Arizona, showcased their cold air balloons “Snip” and “Chip” promoting spay/neuter and microchip identification for all pets. A youth mariachi band from Montclair High School performed on the plaza. The campus community and local animal-related communities all came out for a wonderful celebration of this inaugural event.

The Animal Care Conference in Orange, Calif, (co-sponsored by the California Veterinary Medical Association, California Association of Animal Control Officers and the Humane Society of the United States) brought together enthusiastic folks from animal-related communities and organizations. CVM faculty member, Dr. Lara Rasmussen gave a presentation, “Advanced Care for the Individual Sick/Injured Shelter Animal: Integrating Shelters, Rescues, Primary and Specialty DVMs, and Medical Foster Care Providers,” and Dean Shirley Johnston gave a presentation, “Impact of Early Spay & Neuter on Development and Metabolic Rate in the Domestic Cat”.

San Bernardino County entrepreneurs Wen and Mei Lien Chang bestow a $500,000 gift upon the College of Veterinary Medicine. A current member of Western University's board of trustees, Mr. & Mrs. Chang honored the College with this gift given the anticipated impact this new school will have on the community and the unprecedented educational opportunities it creates in Southern California.

Senate Bill 1263 (introduced by Senator Nell Soto, D-32) was approved by the State Senate (22 April) and the State Assembly (10 June) and now goes to the Governor’s desk for signing. The bill would provide for equivalent California Practice Act exemptions for veterinary students and veterinary faculty at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Western University of Health Sciences and the School of Veterinary Medicine at University of California, Davis. The bill also has been amended to correct typographical errors, to require that licensed veterinarians supervising veterinary students in off-site practices be in good standing, and to require that the Veterinary Medical Board approve content of the courses on the California Veterinary Practice act that exempt California students from that part of the State Board examination.
ELECTRONIC CONFERENCE ON VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH AND CONTROL OF ZOONOSES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
Moderated by Associate Dean Ashley Robinson

In conjunction with the World Organization for Animal Health, this conference was sponsored by two United Nations agencies: the Food & Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization. The major objective was to provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and opinions in those areas where veterinary medicine can or should be making a greater contribution to human health in developing countries. Veterinary Public health (VPH) was defined as contributions to the physical, mental, and social well being of humans through an understanding and application of veterinary science.

Topics included: 1) mechanisms to reduce zoonotic diseases (rabies, brucellosis and echinococcosis) still causing significant human illness in many countries; 2) types of assistance developing countries need from both international agencies and bilateral donors; 3) significant trends likely to impact VPH in the 21st century, such as climate change, increasing urbanization, intensification of animal production, greater international movement of people, animals and products; 4) making available reliable and affordable Internet access for veterinarians and other health professionals in developing countries; 5) improving education and training in VPH in some veterinary schools in developing countries; and 6) improving communication and collaboration between veterinarians in developing countries and their counterparts in human medicine.

For those interested in reading the background paper, topics and contributions see: http://www.fao.org/ag/aga/agah/VPHconf/Home.htm

Dr. Robinson will present the major conclusions and recommendations from this conference at the World Veterinary Congress in Tunis, Tunisia, September 25-29,2002. Further details about this conference and topics can be found at: www.worldvetunisia2002.com