As we enjoy the beginning of another new school year at Western University, our college is focusing on the hiring of new faculty and on the beginning of the admissions process for our charter class to be admitted in the fall of 2003. You will read more about the admissions process later in this issue, but our director of admissions and admissions coordinator have been hired, applications are starting to arrive (the deadline is October 1, 2002), our admissions committee has been formed, and we have finalized our admissions process.

Our first new faculty hires of the 2002-2003 academic year, our associate deans, are people who have worked for us in a temporary or part-time capacity in the past. Associate Dean for Preclinical Programs Dr. R. Ashley Robinson was born in New Zealand, completed his veterinary education in Australia, and his MPH and PhD at the University of Minnesota, where we worked together on the faculty for more than two decades. Ashley’s areas of academic expertise are in epidemiology, microbiology, small ruminant medicine and international programs. He has traveled the world as a consultant in veterinary epidemiology, especially in countries of Southeast Asia and the Middle East. For several years following retirement, he and his wife, Stella, lived in Amman, Jordan, where he was part of an FAO/Tufts University team working to control spread of zoonotic diseases (those transmissible from animals to man) in Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Palestine and Syria. His responsibility here at Western University is the oversight of the entire curriculum of the first two years, which includes the Problem-Based-Learning curriculum (16 credits per semester), clinical skills curriculum and the Veterinary Issues course.

Associate Dean Robert Mason is another old friend from the University of Minnesota, as he completed his DVM degree there in 1975, the first year that Gary and I joined the staff as small animal interns. After continuing his education at the Animal Medical Center in New York City, Bob moved to California and, for more than 15 years, has owned the Animal Medical Clinic in Redondo Beach. In 1999 he accepted part-time employment with Western University as a consultant to assist us in the identification of third-year practice partners. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)
Western University’s College of Veterinary Medicine’s Third annual participation in the Tri-Cities Mental Health Homeless Health Fair was another success this year thanks to many supporters. Kal Kan Co. supplied much needed dog and cat food, Merial supplied vaccines and flea products, Felicie Lewis (senior Merial representative) provided some valuable sweat equity (hot dog!), and IDEXX supplied blood testing kits. Volunteer veterinary assistants/technicians from Cal Poly Pomona and surrounding area veterinary clinics staffed our health care booth along with CVM faculty members, Drs. Gary Johnston, Lara Rasmussen and Ashley Robinson. Dogs and cats living with homeless people in Pomona and surrounding cities received thorough histories and physical examinations, necessary vaccinations, de-worm and de-flea treatments, heartworm/virus blood screening, and food and pet products.

The Inland Valley Humane Society (IVHS) subsidized licenses and spay/neuter vouchers for attendees, and pets were spayed/neutered by Dr. Rasmussen and volunteer veterinary assistants/technicians at the IVHS Veterinary Care Center. All animals received essential grooming through the volunteer efforts of professional groomer Michelle Fisher, Happy Tails to You and Abracadabra mobile grooming services. Fur, Feathers and Fins Pet Sitting assembled a wonderful donation of pet supplies so that all pets received new collars, leashes, bowls and toys.

This community service effort continues to evolve and improve, providing valuable insight for the development of Western U-CVM’s Service Learning programs in the veterinary medical education curriculum.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1:
These practices must have three or more veterinarians (in companion animal work our average is six) and must be within driving distance of Pomona as well as be accredited by the American Animal Hospital Association, or equivalent. As associate dean of clinical programs, Bob has taken a full-time position at Western University, and will oversee the Wellness Clinic on campus, all relationships with third- and fourth-year practice sites, and will serve as a key liaison with all of our external constituents (practicing veterinarians, corporations, donors, political constituents). With this issue Bob also has become editor of the CVM Newsletter.

Finally, I cannot close this issue without a huge THANK YOU to our Dr. Lara Rasmussen, who has composed and formatted and been responsible for our CVM Newsletter up until now. She has done a phenomenal job, using time she didn’t have, in between curriculum development, international speaking on our clinical models advances, and even performing specialty surgery one day a week to spread the word of our growth and development.
The admissions process at the Western University’s College of Veterinary Medicine has been in development for several years in order to recruit the most promising and diverse students into this innovative new curriculum. The Admissions and Scholastic Standing Committee, chaired by Dr. Lara Rasmussen, has oversight of this important process. The committee consists of four full-time CVM faculty members (Dr. Rasmussen, Dr. Carmen Fuentealba, Dr. Margo Machon and one to be announced), two clinical instructors representing our partner practices (Costa Mesa veterinarian Dr. Thomas Carpenter, one to be announced), and Anaheim veterinarian Dr. Chas Hendrix, appointed by the California Veterinary Medical Association to represent organized veterinary medicine.

Applications for admission to the charter class of the Western University’s College of Veterinary Medicine in the fall of 2003, and instructions for the application process are available on the university Web site (www.westernu.edu or wsprod.westernu.edu/vetmed/index.html). Applications are completed online and submitted by mail (postmarked no later than October 1, 2002) with supporting documents such as transcripts, letters of recommendation, standardized test scores and a personal questionnaire.

Applications will be processed by the Office of Student Affairs between October 1, 2002, and the end of the calendar year under the supervision of Director of Veterinary Admissions Michelle Emmert. Ms. Emmert, hired in July 2002, came to this position with three years of experience in student recruitment at Western University, which included fielding many questions from prospective veterinary students. She has a BA in psychology and biology from Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, and she is currently enrolled in an EdD program at UCLA. She will oversee applications processing with Admissions Coordinator Karen Lopez, formerly an administrative assistant at the College of Graduate Nursing. Processing of applications will include entering data into the campus’ BANNER software system, verifying transcripts, and calculating GPAs.

The admissions and scholastic standing committee will review applications in January 2003. Each application will be reviewed by the committee. Selected students will be invited to visit campus in February 2003, for admissions interviews and recruitment information from the campus. Following the interview process, and identification of acceptable candidates for admission, a charter class will be assembled that represents the diversity of society. Letters of admission will be mailed to candidates accepted into the charter class on March 15, 2003.

Prospective students and others with questions are invited to visit the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Web Page at www.westernu.edu/prospectivestudents/vetmed/ or to contact Ms. Emmert at 909-469-5485.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, BIOMEDICAL ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

Gini Barrett has joined the faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Western University as associate professor in biomedical ethics and public policy. Gini has an extensive background in public policy issues, having guided the governmental affairs and public policy programs for the Tejon Ranch, California’s largest contiguous landholding, for eight years; and having directed the motion picture industry’s public policy programs in California while at the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers for eight years.

Ms. Barrett has extensive experience in animal related public policy matters through her six years of volunteer work on the board of commissioners for LA City’s Animal Services Department, her professional role as director of the Western Regional Office of American Humane Association for four years, and through her work consulting to public and private entities on animal welfare issues.

Gini was appointed by the LA County Superior Court as special master on an environmental case involving a wild animal sanctuary. She sits on the board of directors of Farm Animal Services, a nonprofit utilizing market forces to improve farm animal welfare. She is also a member of the LA County Bar Bioethics Committee, and a member of California State University at Northridge’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC.).

PROFESSOR AND PROBLEM-BASED-LEARNING COORDINATOR

Dr. Waldhalm earned doctoral degrees in veterinary physiology and veterinary medicine from Washington State University. His primary research interest is animal reproduction and early embryo survival. He was a founding faculty member of the veterinary college at Mississippi State University and has participated in curricular development, clinical service (ruminant reproduction and embryo transfer) and research (ruminant and wildlife embryo transfer). He served in several administrative roles involving curricular management and faculty development. Most recently, Dr. Waldhalm has been active in developing the Problem-Based-Learning (PBL) curriculum at Mississippi State University, College of Veterinary Medicine and has been invited to several universities, health professions colleges and local school districts (K-12) to provide faculty training in the techniques and philosophy of PBL. Joining Western University has created the rare opportunity for him to participate in the founding of another new college, and to bring the PBL perspective to a new faculty.

Dr. Waldhalm pursues woodworking as a hobby and has been active in Habitat for Humanity. He enjoys trail hiking and bicycling for recreation and fitness.
Mastery of basic introductory clinical skills is essential to effective and humane medical management of the various animal species by veterinary graduates. The goals of the Western University’s CVM Clinical Skills Curriculum are to facilitate student learning and training in basic skills and make clear to the student the approach to and the methods for self-directed learning after graduation.

The first goal will be accomplished using a multi-faceted approach in the Western University’s CVM curriculum. The college’s commitment to Reverence for Life mandates that teaching animals benefit from, or at least are not harmed by, their participation in the clinical skills curriculum. Students first will be required to demonstrate a level of skill mastery in non-animal laboratories and then on cadavers, before applying such skills to normal or diseased animals.

Detailed planning and tracking is occurring before implementation of this skills curriculum to allow for logical progression (simple to complex), the securing of varied learning tools and methods (to accommodate the variety of learning styles), sufficient time structuring (to fit everything in), effective integration into existing patient care settings (maximizing beneficial animal participation), and the establishment of new and necessary partnerships. The approach is to address learning in all of its dimensions, not just to substitute one learning tool, such as a cadaver, for another, such as a living teaching animal.

The curriculum will capitalize on the engaging quality of skills learning and training in the early stages (years 1 & 2) when students are excited about their new academic endeavor. Because the student body will not be uniform in its clinical experience and psychomotor abilities, the curriculum will provide an opportunity for skills mastery at an individualized pace: students will move forward as they master required skills. Relying on similar attributes of many clinical skills across disciplines, students will master valuable rudimentary skills applicable to many settings. The skills curriculum will prepare the student to engage a novel skill appropriately, based on their knowledge and abilities.

The goal of learning how to learn is essential for advancing professional skills after graduation. The student must know that one objective of an exercise is to recognize the value of that learning tool or method to future learning needs. The need for this goal is obvious when the depth and breadth of clinical skills to be mastered in four years are examined. Students must be educated to be life-long learners in order to continue to serve their patients over a professional career, and also in order to maintain their own excitement in an ever-changing profession.

Engaging examples of learning tools to be available to our students include Cat Lab, a 3-D computer assisted learning program by Neotek, that guides and tests the student through feline gross anatomy. The Cowch (named #9, pictured below) will serve both as a fundraiser and the “skin” for an interactive bovine rectal palpation model currently in development. With rudimentary skills such as “seeing with your hands” mastered, students will move into the inanimate, simulated setting of the rectal palpation model to perfect the details of palpation prior to application in the patient setting. These highlighted learning tools were generously provided to the College of Veterinary Medicine by the Ethical Science and Education Coalition/New England Anti-vivisection Society.

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Associate Dean Ashley Robinson, chair
Associate Professor Gini Barrett
Professor Gary Johnston
Assistant Professor Lara Rasmussen
Professor Stephen Waldhalm
Staff Support: Katherine Samson, administrative assistant

* The Committee reviews the detailed descriptions, learns issues and outcome expectations of each course and instructional units in the college annually. It will strive to eliminate excessive curriculum redundancy, recommend modifications as deemed necessary for improvement of curriculum and instruction, and will be responsible for periodic review of the technical standards and recommendations on modification of those standards when deemed appropriate.
On July 9, 2002, Governor Gray Davis (left) signed SB 1263, an act to amend the state's veterinary practice act, into law. It will take effect on January 1, 2003. SB 1263 amends the practice act in three ways that will confer equal privileges to our Western University CVM faculty and students as is currently enjoyed by veterinary faculty and students at UC Davis. These include (1) permitting our students to participate in diagnosis, treatment and prescribing drugs for animals under the supervision of a veterinarian licensed in the state, (2) permitting our faculty who are veterinarians to diagnose and treat animals in the state if doing so as part of a recognized portion of the curriculum (for example, a faculty radiologist may make a radiographic diagnosis even if that radiologist is not licensed in the state), and (3) Western University students who successfully complete a course on the California Veterinary Practice Act will be excluded from later having to take that portion of the state board examination. Thank you to our own Senator Nell Soto for introducing this important legislation and for shepherding it through the legislative process. These measures will be important ones in the third-year practice experiences taken by our students. Thank you to all involved, including the California Veterinary Medical Association and Banfield the Pet Hospital for supporting this legislation in committee hearings. As I write this article, more than half of our faculty who are veterinarians are licensed in the state, and we will encourage licensure of new faculty as well.