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ABOUT US
At the WesternU College of Veterinary Medicine, our mission is to foster a reverence for life and promote an environment that creates healthy and happy pets.

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The College of Veterinary Medicine continues to attract a strong applicant pool in the face of newly accredited veterinary colleges -- four since 2010 -- as well as the impending addition of a new college in Texas and a potential new college in Arizona.

We received approximately 900 applicants by the end of last year’s cycle. This year’s application process was significantly affected by weather disasters (Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, and the California fires) resulting in a delay in the posting and processing of applications. This year, we will be interviewing approximately 425 (out of 775 applicants) students for 105 positions in the class of 2022.

We are pleased to have achieved an eight percent increase in the number of males enrolled in this year’s class. Additionally, 27 percent of the class of 2021 originates from non-western states, providing greater potential for diversity in thought and ideological values. We are proud of our successful efforts to diversify our student body and remain committed to graduating classes that mirror the face of society.

Another point of pride is the recent opening of the WesternU East Valley Spay/Neuter Center, located at the East Valley Animal Shelter in Van Nuys, Calif. The clinic was opened to the public on Oct. 27, due to a successful partnership with the City of Los Angeles Animal Services and the Michelson Found Animals Foundation. The clinic will offer spay and neuter services to the shelter and local communities along with wellness and preventive care. This partnership provides the college with a new clinical teaching site for our students to receive training in efficient and safe techniques for high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter and real world, hands-on experience. We are also excited to develop more focused training in shelter medicine and community practice for students and plan to extend that training to postgraduates in the future. Our first students will begin rotation through the clinic in January.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the loss of one of our own Dr. Tom Phillips who passed away unexpectedly in November. Dr. Phillips was one of the college’s founding faculty, and a devoted teacher/mentor. His untimely death prevents us from sharing his accomplishments in this edition of Outlook, but we’ll correct the omission in the next issue. Memorial services have been held for the family and the college. He is already missed!

Phillip D. Nelson, DVM, PhD

Dean’s Calendar

| Jan. 26–28 | California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) Board of Governors Meeting, Costa Mesa, California. |
| Feb. 3–7   | North American Veterinary Conference (NAVC), Orlando, Florida. |
| Feb. 22–24 | 2018 Western Regional Iverson Bell Summit Conference, Western U campus, Pomona, California. |
| March 1–4  | AAVMC Annual Meeting, Washington DC. |
| March 4–8  | Western Veterinary Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada. |
| March 21–24| Tuskegee Veterinary Symposium, Tuskegee, Alabama. |
| March 26–31| AAVMC Delegation to Cuba. |
After graduation from WesternU, I took a small animal rotating internship in Los Angeles, Calif., where I gained invaluable clinical experience. While looking for opportunities that suited my passion in wildlife conservation, I discovered the Presidential Management Fellowship. This program is a full-time, two-year developmental leadership appointment designed to train recent advanced-degree graduates to be well-rounded leaders in the federal government.

Through this fellowship, I am currently a veterinary medical officer at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) in Madison, Wis. I serve as a member of the leadership team, hold supervisory and managerial responsibilities, and serve on several multi-agency wildlife disease task forces.

Additionally, I have worked on several publications regarding the concept of One Health; chronic wasting disease; Bsal, a fungal disease of salamanders; mortality patterns of an endangered Hawaiian bird; lead toxicity in California condors; and the scope of practice of national wildlife health programs in collaboration with 11 European, Asian, and South Pacific countries. I have also worked on several projects with the World Organisation for Animal Health, the national wildlife health programs of Thailand and South Korea, and the University of Wisconsin College of Veterinary Medicine.

As part of the fellowship, I spent five months in Hawaii as the special assistant to the Superintendent of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). I traveled to the remote island of Johnston Atoll and helped manage its wildlife conservation and research program, analyzed six years of research data, developed interagency collaborations with USGS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and prepared official USFWS comments.

As a veterinary medical officer, I have presented at multiple congressional briefings on Capitol Hill as well as several national conferences, and attended congressional hearings.

I have also completed over 180 hours of scientific and leadership training through the fellowship and will graduate with a master of public health degree from the University of Minnesota by the end of the year.

During a presentation at WesternU on Jan. 13, 2017, I emphasized the various opportunities that veterinarians have outside a traditional clinical practice. There are veterinary jobs in various governmental agencies within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and many more. For any veterinary federal government career, the Presidential Management Fellowship is a great path towards these positions.

I recommend that veterinary students who are interested in non-traditional careers discover their passions and decide how they want to contribute to the broader picture of animal, human, and ecosystem health. All veterinarians can strive to be leaders in today’s world.
DEAN PHILLIP NELSON NAMED AAVMC BOARD PRESIDENT

WesternU’s College of Veterinary Medicine Dean Phillip Nelson, DVM, PhD, recently began a one-year term as president of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) Board of Directors.

The 71 college members of the international AAVMC provide leadership for and promote excellence in academic veterinary medicine so that veterinarians are equipped to protect animal health, relieve animal suffering, conserve animal resources, promote public health, and advance medical knowledge. It offers a leadership training program and scholarships, recognizes teaching excellence and is a participant in accreditation.

“We are a small, yet critically important profession,” Dr. Nelson said. “As society is propelled forward by technological advances, agricultural and animal related issues become more and more abstract, while we become less and less knowledgeable of the real impact of food production, food safety, and zoonotic diseases.

“Organizations like the AAVMC serve as a sentinel voice for those involved in the education of veterinary professionals,” he said. “It also serves as a forum for educators to advance educational techniques, as an advocate for students and faculty, and—through its members—as a scientific resource for the broader profession and society.

“My major goal is to improve communication within the organization and among its members, which will hopefully enhance member engagement.”

“What I am able to do as president will determine to what degree my appointment might matter.”

REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON FACULTY DEVELOPMENT


The conference focused on the latest developments in teaching, including use of technology and teaching scholarship, critical thinking, and clinical reasoning. Just prior to the conference in Ft. Collins was the Veterinary Education, Teaching and Scholarship (VETS) 1.0 program dedicated to student-centered learning strategies and best practices for designing instruction, including constructing and deconstructing exams, facilitating learning experiences and feedback, and writing learning objectives.

The WesternU faculty presentations included educational topics similar to those held in the local WesternU CVM Teaching Academy.

Paul Gordon-Ross, DVM, MS, Peggy Barr, DVM, PhD and Ohad Levi, DVM, presented sessions on their educational research. Ana Alcaraz, DVM, PhD, DACVP, Dr. Barr and Dr. Levi also co-chaired workshops on peer review and other issues. Others attending were Suzie Kovacs, MSc, PhD; Ken Noriega, MS; Hillary Carroll, DVM; Spring Halland, DVM, CVA, DACVIM; Maria Fahie, DVM, PhD, DACVS; and Malika Kachani, PhD, DVM.

The teaching academy conference reunited former WesternU faculty member, Peggy Schmidt, at left, with Suzie Kovacs, center, Malika Kachani, right, and other WesternU faculty. Photo courtesy of Ana Alcaraz.

Member colleges of the West Region organization are the veterinary schools of Colorado State University, Oregon State University, University of California, Davis, Washington State University, and Western University of Health Sciences.
Faculty News

RATS AND FERRETS, OH MY!

First came the rats. Then furry little ferrets.

In a consulting room at the CVM Pet Health Center, Professor Lyon Lee, DVM, PhD, DACVAA, has been investigating the effects of a specific anesthesia on these small animals for quite some time. The anesthesia under study is Alfaxalone, a neuroactive steroid and general anesthetic approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in cats and dogs.

Alfaxalone was first introduced in the 1970s, but allergies associated with a derivative of castor oil used in the first formula forced the manufacturer to take it off the market. The newest formulation contains no such troubling ingredient and is said to be safer than some other anesthetics used in animal surgery, with fewer adverse side effects. Dr. Lee won a grant to document in detail how it affects small animals, and how effective it is in moderating pain, muscle relaxation, and consciousness.

Dr. Lee, assisted by Associate Professor Curtis Eng, DVM, Assistant Professor Maisie Dawes DVM, PHD, DACVIM, and several veterinary students, is specifically interested in seeing how Alfaxalone might diminish the adverse side effects of commonly used drugs. The team monitors heart rate, blood pressure, the respiratory system, and oxygenation of the animals under anesthesia. Blood is drawn several times during a 40-minute procedure to track effects on the heart, liver, and kidneys.

“We spent a year and a half conducting evaluations on lab rats,” Dr. Lee said. “Now we have about 12 ferrets for this part of the study. The ferrets are all pets, owned by members of the community.”

In return for volunteering their pets for the study, the owners will have free health care and vaccinations for their ferrets.

“They will go back to their homes when we finish with them,” Dr. Lee said. The rats are better off, too. While they were purchased as laboratory animals, all of them have been adopted as pets by students and staff. Samantha Phillips, DVM ’19, one of the students assisting in the study, worked closely with the rats and played an instrumental role in the adoptions.

“You get attached,” she explained.

Prof, alum provide giant panda training and research in China

In an effort to conserve the giant panda population, College of Veterinary Medicine Associate Professor David Kersey, PhD, with alumna Jessica Coote, DVM ’15, provided training and set up research projects in China that they hope will help save other endangered species.

Dr. Kersey had been invited by the Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda (CCRCGP) Dujiangyan Base (DJY) and the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breading (Chengdu Base). He has been providing training in China on giant panda hormone monitoring and breeding for more than a decade.

Dr. Coote had worked in Dr. Kersey’s lab as a summer intern in 2013, conducting a study to validate endocrine monitoring methods for use in the snow leopard.

“Captive breeding of endangered or threatened species is only part of the equation,” Dr. Kersey said. “The other is ensuring that there is habitat for animals that go back from where they have been extricated.”

Over 11 days during the summer, Dr. Kersey and Dr. Coote provided follow-up training on endocrine monitoring techniques, set up a study to measure hormones of giant pandas in the wild, and discussed future projects at the Chengdu Base.

For the journey, Dr. Coote took vacation days from her job as a supervisory port veterinary medical officer for the US Department of Agriculture at the Los Angeles Animal Import Center.

Details about their work in China may be accessed here:

https://news.westernu.edu/cvm-prof-alum-provide-giant-panda-training-and-research-in-china/
CVM Professor Tracey McNamara, DVM, DACVP, NAPf was mentioned in an Aug. 19, 2017 article titled “Want to keep America safe? Train more veterinarians” by Fox News Opinion. The article states that three-quarters of newly emerging human diseases can be traced back to animals and highlights Dr. McNamara’s work to link the deaths of several elderly people in New York and the deaths of wild crows and captive birds at the Bronx Zoo to West Nile virus. Dr. McNamara, then head pathologist of the zoo, identified the first case of the virus in the Western Hemisphere in 1999. Read the story here:


Linda Kidd, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, has joined the Scientific Advisory Board for the Morris Animal Foundation. The foundation is a nonprofit organization that invests in science to advance global animal health. Since its founding in 1948, the foundation’s investments in research have led to significant breakthroughs in diagnostics, treatments and prevention practices. Dr. Kidd recently has lectured about vector-borne disease screening and ticks and fleas at the Santa Barbara Ventura County Veterinary Medical Association; the Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas, Nev.; and the North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando, Fla.

A collaborative study on post-chemotherapy perforation in cats is to be published in the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery. Dr. Kidd and Zachary Crouse, DVM ’13, DACVIM, represented WesternU in the study.

Another collaborative study of the relationship of vector-borne pathogens with immune-mediated disease in Southern California dogs been published in the Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine. Dr. Kidd represented WesternU’s participation in the research, which included a veterinary hospital, a specialist practice, and two other veterinary colleges. Some of the funding was provided by WesternU’s intramural grants and matching funds program. The article may be accessed here:


Assistant Professors Jijun Hao, PhD, and Gagandeep Kaur, DVM, PhD, along with David Clark, DVM, Lyon Lee, DVM, PhD, DACVAA, and Fanglong Dong, PhD, were awarded funding from Vet Cell Therapeutics to study the use of stem cells to treat a chronic canine skin disease associated with allergies. Dr. Hao also has recently published two articles; the first, on transmembrane receptors, was published in PLOS Computational Biology. Collaborators included a team from the College of Pharmacy and CVM research technician Chen Xie, PhD. Dr. Hao’s second article about carcinoma cells was published by Stem Cells International.

Associate Professor Brian Oakley, PhD, attended IPC2017, the International Probiotics Conference in Budapest, Hungary held June 20-23. Dr. Oakley chaired the Animal Health session and presented a lecture regarding research and development for avian probiotics.
A manuscript regarding RNA sequencing in chickens that was the work of associate professors Kristopher Irizarry, PhD, and Yvonne Drechsler, MS, PhD, as well as Ellen Collisson, MS, PhD, and others, has been accepted for publication in PLOS ONE. The study, funded by the US Department of Agriculture, focused on reducing the need for antibiotics, which has implications for food safety.

A report from a collaborative radiologic study on the forefoot of foals led by CVM Associate Professor Babak Faramarzi, DVM, MS, PhD, and Allison Salinger, DMV ’18, was presented at the October 2017 conference of the American College of Veterinary Radiologists in Phoenix, Ariz. A manuscript describing the research will be published in the Veterinary and Comparative Orthopedics and Traumatology (VCOT) journal. Dr. Faramarzi also was part of a project to reveal the histologic architecture of the feet of racing horses, along with Wael Khamas, DVM, MS, PhD, who presented the results at the annual conference of the American Association of Veterinary Anatomists in Auburn, Ala.

Yiling Hong, PhD, a CVM associate professor, was named a corresponding author in a research article published in the Environmental Research journal. The study used human embryo stem cells to identify the harmful impacts the tar in cigarette butts have on brain development.

Post-doctoral student Elton Vasconcelos worked to identify 7,000 novel non-coding RNAs as a research project in Brazil last year and the results have been published in Nature, the international weekly journal of science.

Professor Ana Alcaraz DVM, PhD, DACVP, was one of 10 facilitators in charge of a round-table discussion, “Meet the Experts,” at the 2017 Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (SCAVMA) Leadership Conference held in August. The conference is a meeting of approximately 100 student leaders and faculty members from all 37 veterinary colleges represented in the SAVMA House of Delegates.

Professor Teresa Y. Morishita, DVM, PhD, DACPV, has been appointed to the Assessment Development Committee of the International Council for Veterinary Assessment (IVCA). Dr. Morishita is one of 11 members on the IVCA’s Assessment Development Committee, which oversees the main content areas of the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE), selects and appoints NAVLE item writers each year and participates in item and form review meetings. The NAVLE is a requirement for licensure to practice veterinary medicine in all licensing jurisdictions in North America.
CVM’s Associate Professor Curtis Eng, DVM, got the phone call in July. A team headed by Los Angeles County’s Animal Care and Control had searched a home in a suburban Southern California community and confiscated more than 80 venomous snakes, tortoises and exotic birds, as well as eight small American alligators.

The alligators – four males and four females – were found in a backyard spa, and would be temporarily housed in a sheltered enclosure at the Pasadena Humane Society. Could Dr. Eng and some of his students come to Pasadena to look them over?

Dr. Eng, formerly chief veterinarian and California Condor program manager at the Los Angeles Zoo, has volunteered for several years at the humane society, where he cares for rescued wildlife and exotic animals. Veterinary students Won Suk, DVM ’19, and Anna-Marie Ruoff, DVM ’18, accompany Dr. Eng on his visits to Pasadena.

The gators ranged in weight from 13 to about 30 pounds, and they had all their teeth. The veterinary team and humane society handlers restrained the gators in the style of the late celebrity Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin to examine and weigh them and drew blood for tests.

“We had to get on top of them and tape their mouths shut,” Dr. Eng said.

“All eight were in excellent shape, and pretty amenable to it all, as amenable as a gator can be. They appeared to be well taken care of, although some were missing a few toes, the result of alligator aggression at feeding time.”

The gators were fed twice a week, mostly mice, rats and rabbits, and sometimes, quail. “They would have gotten fish, too, if we had a source for fresh fish,” Dr. Eng said.

For 18 years, the humane society enclosure had been home to Tina, a rescued six-foot alligator. Dr. Eng, who said Tina was in good health but a bit overweight, cared for her until she was moved to the Los Angeles Zoo last year.
While in Pasadena, the young gators swam and basked in the sun, said Jamie Holeman, director of public relations and marketing at the humane society. “They make noises that sound like the bark of a dog,” she added. “When they are upset, they hiss.”

Dr. Eng’s gator patients now reside at the Colorado Gators Reptile Park, Alligator and Reptile Rescue and Fish Farm in Mosca, Colo. It’s a family-oriented educational facility with geothermal spring waters that started as a fish farm, then evolved into a sanctuary for unwanted exotic pets.

“All of our ponds are full of tilapia,” said Jay Young, a family member and the park’s manager. “The fish help clean the gator habitat by eating the algae, and the gators eat the fish. Chasing the fish is good exercise for them.”

Young heard about the confiscation and offered to take them in. After completing all the required paperwork, the gators were transported by van to the park, arriving on Oct. 8. The facility has 300 other alligators, and many are former pets.

If a gator has room to grow, it could ultimately be as long as eight to 10 feet during their 60- to 90-year lifespan. But the main growth is in the first three years of life.

“Judging by the shape of skulls, I’d say the L.A. gators are at least 8 years old, and very small for their age, so they were confined in a small habitat for a very long time,” Young said. “Their growth is stunted for life.

“We do a lot of rescues like this. It’s not their fault they wound up in a backyard illegally.”
The Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine now operates a spay/neuter clinic attached to the busiest animal shelter in the City of Los Angeles, Calif.

After years of discussion and many months of preparation, the WesternU East Valley Spay/Neuter Clinic opened for business in the community of Van Nuys on Oct. 27, the day after a celebratory grand opening that acknowledged Western University of Health Sciences’s WesternU’s partners in the venture, the Los Angeles Department of Animal Services and the Michelson Found Animal Foundation.

Hospital Director Zarah Hedge, DVM ’09, MPH, DACVPM, and an assistant professor at CVM, had long prepared for the first day, cross-training her small staff of two registered veterinary technicians, two animal care assistants and a front desk receptionist. The East Valley shelter has its own staff veterinarian and technicians who are tasked with providing medical care for the 4,000 animals that enter the shelter every year. Spay and neuter surgeries are handled by the clinic.

The clinic handles the spay and neuter surgeries. Large numbers of unaltered animals, whether picked up as strays or relinquished by their owners, need to be spayed or neutered in order to have new homes.

“Ideally, we want to spay and neuter them as soon as possible after they arrive at the shelter, so when they are adopted, they can go home right away,” Dr. Hedge said. “We also spay and neuter a large number of animals that have already been adopted. We do the procedure and their adopter picks them up from us.”
“The world of homeless animals is a potential breach in society’s defenses against emerging zoonotic diseases,” said CVM Dean Phillip Nelson, DVM, PhD. “Anything we do to reduce pet homelessness helps public health efforts.”

As the sole clinic veterinarian, Dr. Hedge estimates that she performs from 20 to 25 such surgeries each day. At full staff, with an additional veterinarian and technical staff, more technicians and assistants, she said, the clinic could complete 30-40 procedures each day, which also would increase the revenue it creates for the college generated and available for the college’s educational mission.

“I am also hopeful we will receive get donations and grants to aid us in making the clinic sustainable and helping to cover the costs for additional surgeries we are asked to do for the shelter,” Dr. Hedge said.

WesternU’s new clinic also provides low-cost, preventative health care for pets, including vaccinations, deworming, and flea control, during the afternoon hours it is open to the public.

The clinic has educational benefits as well. Fourth-year veterinary students will begin rotating through the clinic in January, and soon after that, third-year students will begin completing clinical courses at the facility.

“For both third- and fourth-year students, it will be a fairly fast-paced environment, with lots of hands-on experience in both shelter medicine and community clinical practice.” Dr. Hedge said. “They will conduct physical exams, handle client communication, administer anesthesia, and participate in the surgeries.”

Students may spend a month at the clinic as part of their rotation, or opt for a two-week independent study externship, she said.

“There will be time to observe the shelter, sit in the lobby, and talk to people,” Dr. Hedge said. “What experience do people have that leads them to relinquish their animals? What part is played by access to veterinary care and affordability?”

The clinic is a brick-and-mortar extension of the community spay and neuter services performed by the college’s two VACS mobile units, allowing more students to have the experience.

“We’re looking forward to showing our students what it means to truly be in service to the community,” Dr. Nelson said.
Western University of Health Sciences welcomed nearly 1,000 new students at Convocation, the traditional opening of the academic year, on Aug. 12, 2017, at the Fairplex in Pomona, Calif. The convocation was combined with the inauguration ceremony of President Daniel R. Wilson, MD, PhD.

Dr. Wilson is only the second president of WesternU. On July 1, 2016, he succeeded President Emeritus Philip Pomerantz, PhD. He announced at his Inauguration that WesternU will move forward in bold new directions while using its foundational values of humanism, education, and scientific excellence as its compass.

WesternU Board of Trustees Chairman Richard Bond, DO ’82, DrPH, invested Wilson into the Office of President and presented him with the President’s Medal, saying that Dr. Wilson encourages collaboration, inspiration and invention.

Dr. Wilson announced three new centers for innovation, virtual learning and clinical research, while emphasizing that education will always be WesternU’s priority.

“We will always robustly prepare competent students in the full range of health sciences,” Dr. Wilson said. “Yet we will do much, much more, including new campuses, colleges, and programs imbued with and guided by our pioneering culture and innovative character.”

More than 300 faculty, administrators and dignitaries were on stage for the Inauguration/Convocation. Wayne State University President M. Roy Wilson, MD, MS, formally introduced Dr. Wilson and listed his many accomplishments, saying of the new president, “I can think of no one better suited to answer the call. He is ready for the challenge.”

Each of WesternU’s nine colleges held a white coat ceremony following the Inauguration and Convocation ceremony. Each student donned a white coat for the first time, symbolizing their entry into the health professions.

For details on the Convocation/Inauguration ceremony, go to: https://news.westernu.edu/westernu-formally-invests-president-daniel-r-wilson-welcomes-nearly-1000-new-students/
Welcome Week launches the new Vet Med school year

The six-day schedule for the 105 new Year 1 Vet Med students was hectic.

Starting early Monday morning on Aug. 7, and continuing through Friday afternoon’s President’s symposium on Aug. 11, the class of 2021 followed a full and precise schedule of intensive and inspirational instruction on how to be successful in veterinary school. After the mandatory get-acquainted sessions, lectures, tours and lunchtime meetings that took up the weekdays, Saturday, Aug. 12, was about celebration. The students attended the Presidential Inauguration and Convocation ceremony in the afternoon, gathering to don symbolic white lab coats in front of their families and friends.

Early in the week, students wearing their new black Vet Med t-shirts filed into the Johnston classroom, where Wael Khamas, DVM, MS, PhD, and Year 1 director, explained the founding principles of the school, and how problem-based learning works.

“Most of you have experienced the didactic classroom lectures, where you are expected to memorize facts so you can pass your exams,” Dr. Khamas said. “Self-directed learning is new to you. You may ask yourself, can I really change to a new way to learn? You may struggle during the first block, and that’s OK. Know that you will be successful if you work hard.”

Year 1 students also became acquainted with the variety of student clubs and the workings of the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (SCAVMA). A highlight was the SCAVMA Big Sib/Little Sib (as in sibling) lunch, when Year 1 students were paired with returning Year 2 students, who will guide them through campus life issues.

Year 2 students attended two days of sessions that updated them on campus news and gave presentations on personal finance management and various college resources available such as inter-professional education, learning enhancement and academic development, and the center for disability and health policy.

Orientation for Year 3 students took place on a single day, on Friday, Aug 4. Highlights included preparations for instructional blocks about livestock, horses, zoo animals, lab animals, small animals, pathology, and surgery. For the first time, third-year preceptors were invited to participate in a clinical reasoning training workshop and a panel discussion. It ended with a welcome-back barbecue.

Faculty and staff organizing the activities included Kimiberly Jones, Karla Marquez; Tim McPheron; Anna Wilton; Jennifer Buur, DVM, DACVP, PhD; Spring Halland, DVM, CVA, DACVIM; Tracey McNamara, DVM, DACVP; Peggy Barr, DVM, PhD; Beth Boynton, DVM; and Ron Terra, DVM, MBA, MS.

The Journey

This is the first of three columns that will follow the class of 2020 through its second year.

My journey through veterinary school had a rough start. The first time I applied, I was rejected. The second time, I was accepted by the veterinary program at Massey University in New Zealand. “Wow, what an adventure,” I thought. While I loved my experience there, financial and emotional obstacles proved much too overwhelming to remain. Disheartened but determined, I applied to WesternU a third time, and this time, was accepted.

At first, I constantly compared my first year at WesternU with my year in New Zealand, and eventually learned to appreciate the differences in what each program had to offer, as well as what I had gained from each.

My first block experience in the second year at WesternU was amazing. I had a great group and a great facilitator. I enjoy coming to class and observing different approaches everyone has to a single problem. I have become more patient, open-minded and appreciative of working in groups.

I would like to go into zoo or wildlife medicine, but the clinical rotations in the third and fourth year will really open my eyes to all the possibilities available to me. I believe that WesternU will help me to achieve my goals.
Class of 2021 Profiles
First-year CVM students are profiled throughout the year

Sebastian Betancourt Vasquez
I grew up in Queens, New York, and majored in veterinary and biomedical sciences at Pennsylvania State University. I have worked with small animals at the North Shore Animal League in New York, horses at the Peterson and Smith Equine Hospital in Florida, farm animals in Belize, and wildlife in South Africa. I am interested in veterinary neurology, surgery, and emergency care.

Alanna Blevins-Layton
I am from a small town in Southern California. I graduated from California State University, Fresno, with a bachelor’s degree in animal science with a pre-veterinary emphasis. Most of my experience is with an exclusive mobile equine practice. I am interested in large animal medicine with a specialization in performance horses or equine reproduction.

Alexis Awrey
I grew up in Southern California, and earned a bachelor’s degree from Colorado State University, majoring in equine sciences. While in school, I worked at CSU’s Equine Orthopedic Research Center and became interested in equine sports medicine and rehabilitation. I also competed on the university’s collegiate rodeo team all four years.

Carly Brink
I was born and raised in Acton, Calif. After I graduated from high school, I continued my education at California State University, San Marcos, where I obtained a degree in biology. During my undergraduate career, I worked at a 24-hour emergency equine hospital. That is where I found my passion for veterinary medicine.

Vaneh Allahverde
I grew up in Glendale, Calif., and earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology at the University of California at San Diego. I worked at a 24-hour emergency and specialty hospital in Los Angeles, Calif., and my interest is in small animal medicine. I traveled to Nicaragua with World Vets for field services projects and hope to work in developing countries in the future.

Soraya Aramburo
I grew up in Queens, New York, and majored in veterinary and biomedical sciences at Pennsylvania State University. I have worked with small animals at the North Shore Animal League in New York, horses at the Peterson and Smith Equine Hospital in Florida, farm animals in Belize, and wildlife in South Africa. I am interested in veterinary neurology, surgery, and emergency care.

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I grew up in Livermore, Calif., and obtained a cosmetology license when I was still in high school. While I was earning a bachelor’s degree in biology from Western Oregon University, I volunteered at a wildlife rehabilitation center; traveled to Nicaragua with World Vets, and completed an internship at an exotic animal sanctuary in Kona, Hawaii. I am open to all fields of veterinary medicine.

Victoria Fliehr

I was raised in Menifee in Southern California. I earned a bachelor’s degree in agriculture from the University of Hawaii, Hilo. I worked at a small animal clinic in Hilo during my undergraduate years and volunteered at the university’s farm. I am currently interested in wildlife/zoologic medicine and animal reproduction and hope to save endangered species.

Kyle Frazier

I grew up in Ohio. I earned a bachelor’s degree in animal science from Cornell University in New York, and a master’s degree in animal biology from the University of California, Davis. I worked in the UC Davis poultry medicine laboratory, researching backyard poultry health and management, and respiratory diseases, including avian influenza.

Theodore Derksen

I grew up in Livermore, Calif., and obtained a cosmetology license when I was still in high school. While I was earning a bachelor’s degree in biology from Western Oregon University, I volunteered at a wildlife rehabilitation center; traveled to Nicaragua with World Vets, and completed an internship at an exotic animal sanctuary in Kona, Hawaii. I am open to all fields of veterinary medicine.

Adrian Frazier

I grew up in Southern Calif. After high school, I attended Union College in Kentucky on athletic and music scholarships. I transferred to the University of Hawaii, Hilo, where I earned a degree in agriculture. While in school, I did a veterinary technician internship at a small animal clinic. I am interested in animal reproduction and helping to save endangered species from extinction.

Julissa Hoogeveen

I was born in Redlands, Calif., and spent most of my life living in Santa Clarita, Calif. I obtained a bachelor’s degree in animal science with a concentration in pre-veterinary medicine from California State Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo in 2016. I have six years of experience as a small animal and exotic veterinary technician. My interest is small animal medicine.

Paris Gilbert

I am a Southern California native. I earned a bachelor’s degree in animal science from California Polytechnic State University, Pomona, where I worked as a research assistant. I have also worked in a small animal medical practice and in wildlife rehabilitation. I am interested in research and wildlife medicine.

Gabriella Hipp

I was born and raised in Miami, Fla. I am 24 and a first-year veterinary student at Western University of Health Sciences. I enjoy traveling, reading and spending time with my family and friends. My interest in veterinary medicine is focused on animal dentistry.

Kassandra Gonzalez

I graduated from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, with two bachelor’s degrees, one in animal science with a specialization in pre-veterinary medicine, and the other in German studies. I have experience working with bovine, swine, and equine animals and am interested in specializing in large animal medicine.

Tori Greer

I grew up in Chino Hills, Calif., and moved to New York where I obtained a health science degree from Hofstra University in Hempstead. My animal experiences include working at a small animal clinic, competitively riding horses, and interning at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, Calif. I’m looking forward to pursuing my DVM at WesternU.
Their essays on the importance of diversity in the veterinary profession and strategies to achieve it paved the way for students Laura Russey, DVM ’19, and Summer Pepper, DVM ’20, to attend the 2017 Iverson Bell Symposium, held in conjunction with the national meeting of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) in Washington, D.C. in March.

The Iverson Bell Symposium is the oldest and largest diversity-themed event in the profession; the conference promotes diversity and inclusion in academic veterinary medicine.

Here are excerpts from those essays:

LAURA RUSSEY, DVM ’19

Diversity and inclusion are extremely important values to me. As an African-American and a female, I understand and have witnessed the importance of representation, the power of visibility and its ability to validate and encourage the dreams of others. It is my hope that as a female multicultural veterinarian, I can inspire and encourage people of any ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation to follow their dreams and to not be discouraged about entering Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields.

One cannot appreciate the beauty of a mosaic by focusing solely on an individual piece. Mosaics are beautiful because each individual piece comes together to create a vision, a masterpiece. One can find unity in diversity. It is my hope that one day, veterinary medicine will no longer appear on the list of “least diverse professions” and through a united effort, our values of diversity and inclusion as veterinarians can be a model of change for the other professions which may find themselves on the “least diverse professions” list. We now live in an increasingly diverse world; it is our duty to ourselves and to one another to continue to uphold the values of diversity and inclusion within the veterinary profession.

SUMMER PEPPER, DVM ’20

As a student of veterinary medicine, I can help promote diversity by being inclusive, by being the first to extend a friendly handshake to my classmates, regardless of nationality or creed. We tend to polarize to that which we are most familiar. I prefer seeking out those individuals who are most dissimilar to me to learn more. In dissimilarity, we gain perspectives that would be impossible to gain otherwise.

We, as a single species, are just as diverse as the species that we care for within the veterinary profession. It is our duty to develop and maintain a setting that fosters inclusiveness between individual professionals in such a manner that is reflective of our diversified patients and clients. We are, and animals are, a rich and wonderful tapestry, all unique yet all woven together. In the end, diversity in the veterinary field means embracing, not tolerating our differences, and gaining inspiration from the matchless challenges we find together.
Oren Ofer, DVM ’18, and Jimmy Popp, DVM ’18, recently placed 3rd at VetPrep’s inaugural Idea Innovation Competition held at the 2017 Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association Annual Symposium. Their concept, BeatboxECG, an electrocardiogram that can be operated easily from a smartphone and beamed to the cloud for instant sharing, was chosen from a national pool of more than 70 teams.

This tool is relevant for all veterinary practices and is most important for remote clinics with limited cardiac resources. Identifying and researching subclinical disease in pets, as well as military and working dogs, could allow for early treatment of cardiac disease, prolonging animal lives and promoting the human-animal bond. Current ECG technology has many problems like tangled wires and discomfort for the animal. VetPrep gave the team a $2,500 cash prize to assist them in developing their novel idea.

The Idea competition is held exclusively for veterinary students to encourage them to take an entrepreneurial and innovative approach to veterinary medicine.

Year 2 CVM student Trusten Moore is the first WesternU student to serve as an officer for the National Student Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (SVECCS). He was named president-elect at the International Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Symposium in Nashville, Tenn. He will become president of the organization in September 2018.

“Joining a national organization is a way to be a voice and advocate for the profession,” Moore said.

The SVECCS is the liaison and parent organization for individual student chapters established at the various colleges and schools of veterinary medicine in the U.S. and abroad. It promotes the specialties of emergency medicine and critical care.

Moore is also vice president of WesternU’s SVECCS chapter, which partners with emergency hospitals in the Los Angeles, Calif., area to bring emergency and critical care specialists to campus for wet labs and lectures. The chapter recently organized a CPR lab so students could become certified in pet CPR.

The California Thoroughbred Foundation has awarded scholarships to two CVM students, Haley Sullivan, DVM ’18, and Allison Salinger, DVM ’18. Sullivan was given $5,000, and a special $2,000 grant was awarded Salinger. The foundation is dedicated to the advancement of equine research and education.

Five WesternU Vet Med students were selected to present poster abstracts at the 2017 Pacific Veterinary Conference in Long Beach, Calif. Fourth-year student Jaclyn Gosliga and third-year students Cosette Faivre, Mihal Kaminsky, Athena Kepler and Samantha Phillips, attended the summer conference and presented the posters.

Won Kim, DVM ’19, was the first WesternU CVM student to give an oral scientific presentation at the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) annual meeting, which was held in Indianapolis, Ind., in late July. Kim’s research on chicken microflora was made possible by his 2016 Summer Student Fellowship Grant by the WesternU Office of Research and Biotechnology.

Proposals by two CVM students were submitted for summer research programs. A study by Edward Vasquez, DVM ’19, called “The iBunny Project,” which involved the use of a smartphone-based ECG device on rabbits, was submitted for a Morris Animal Foundation (MAF) grant. The proposal by Athena Kepler about the use of MRIs to analyze the equine hoof was submitted for an American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) Second Opportunity program.
A mid boisterous cheers of their families and friends in the Bridges Hall of Music in Claremont, Calif., the 105 new Year 1 College of Veterinary Medicine students participated in a rite of passage: the traditional White Coat Ceremony.

The Aug. 12, event was both joyous and solemn. Keynote speaker Howard Rubin, a member of the Dean’s Advisory Board and the Board of Directors of Trupanion, a provider of medical insurance for cats, told the students that the white lab coat inspires trust.

“Wear your white coat each day, and make a positive impact on others,” Rubin said. “Make sure your patients and clients trust you. They will become your ultimate teachers.”

Dominique Griffon, DVM, MS, PhD, DACVS, announced the names of each student. Faculty members on stage took turns helping them put on the white coats and pose for photos. Lots of long hair needed to be lifted and patted back in place for the portraits.

Justin Adam was first, one of 23 young men in the class of 2021 at the ceremony; he led the orderly march to the stage.

When identical twins Adrian Frazier and Kyle Frazier in turn donned the white coats, several people in the audience reacted with “ohhs.”

Erica Lipari was escorted by her medical alert service dog, Maisie, who wedged herself in the center of the photo, drawing a chorus of “awws.”

Courtney Wypiszynski, already tall and wearing high heels, towered over faculty member Jennifer Buur, DVM, DACVCP, who delighted the crowd when she rose on her tip toes for a little more height.

A three-piece string ensemble made up of Joshua David, Audrey Park and Claire Park, played through the ceremony. Wael Khamas, DVM, MS, PhD, administered the Pledge of Commitment, and Josep Rutllant, DVM, PhD, led the Year 1 students in reciting the Veterinarian’s Oath. Dean Phillip Nelson, DVM, PhD, extended a welcome to the apprentice veterinarians.

“Well, now you are in,” Dr. Nelson told the group. Gesturing to the faculty on stage, the dean said the faculty members represent 18 different countries.

“And you, the class of 2021, are one of the most diverse classes in the nation,” Dr. Nelson said. “We have a lot to learn from each other.”

Dean Nelson addresses the attendees.
The 3rd Annual Student SCAVMA Symposium on April 15, drew 63 Year 2 students. This event, known as the “3rd-year boot camp,” helps students start thinking like clinicians as they prepare for Year 3 courses, according to the symposium organizer, Kyle Santelio, DVM ’19 and SCAVMA student liaison. Topics covered were radiology, bloodwork, toxicology and clinical pathology. Speakers included WesternU faculty Spring Halland, DVM, CVA, DACVIM; Hillary Carroll, DVM; and John Tegzes, MA, VMD, DABVT. Guest speakers included Dr. Georgina Marquez from the VCA West Coast Specialty and Emergency Animal Hospital in Fountain Valley, Calif.; Dr. Anne Reed, a fourth-year preceptor; and Dr. Laura Lane, from Idexx Laboratories, in Huntington Beach, Calif. The sponsors of the sessions were Southern California Veterinary Medical Association (SCVMA), Dechra Veterinary Products, and the CVM Office of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

The new SCAVMA board at a meeting with Dr. Caroline Cantner, assistant director for student initiatives for the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)’s Western Region on the WesternU campus in early September, 2017. From left are Summer Pepper, DVM 2020 class representative, Natalia Alicea, AVMA junior delegate, Alexa Rangel, treasurer, Alice Bourgeon, secretary, Avia Ben-Simon, CVMA delegate 2020, Dr. Cantner, Fannie Chiang, vice president, and Kathleen Rowan, president.

Members of the student chapter of the World Aquatic Veterinary Medical Association learned more about marine mammals on an April 15, whale watching cruise out of Newport Harbor in Newport Beach, Calif.

Clockwise: Rebecca Smith, Sean Wyatt, Corinna Gorgon, Dr. Laura Lane, and Chloe Dillon.
Lil

By Casey Chaney, PT, PhD, OCS, CSCS

Lil was unique. Her Welsh corgi legs, Labrador body and terrier hair were part of it, but that uniqueness was more how she would draw people in with her eyes and how she cocked her head.

Initially dubbed “Diamond” for a marking on her chest, I named her Diamond Lil, after a restaurant I had known. She soon became just Lil. She had short legs and a short name, but a big personality.

She made people smile and piqued their curiosity. Many times, when we were out for a walk, people would roll down their car windows as they passed by to ask, “What kind of dog is that?”

Once drawn in, people could only get so close before she rejected them with a sharp barking rebuke. Her world was mostly her “mom” and her “brother” Max, a tall and muscular yellow Lab and shar pei mix.

Lil survived four surgeries, two of them major, and always came back with sass and a bounce in her step. We celebrated her victory over cancer in October 2016, when we reached the one-year anniversary of her surgeries. Sadly, after Thanksgiving Day, she began to limp. Ultimately, it was thought to be osteosarcoma, or bone cancer, in her shoulder. After a bone scan confirmed our fears, she did not ever get “comfortable” again.

She bravely rode with me to one veterinarian visit after another, but almost as soon as we walked in the door, she was ready to leave and get back in the car. But it was the nights that were horrid; her medication did not significantly diminish her pain.

I had to make the hard decision to let her go. WesternU’s willed body program offered us the opportunity for students to learn from her suffering. So, with the hope that students may learn from the body of this unique little soul, I signed her over.

Dr. Chaney is a professor of physical therapy at the WesternU College of Allied Health Professions.

About the WAVE Program:

The College of Veterinary Medicine’s Reverence for Life Commitment promises that animals will not be harmed in our teaching programs. A key element of this commitment is the WAVE (Willed deceased Animals for Veterinary Education) Program, which reaches out to animal owners to ask that they consider donating their beloved pets’ remains to anatomy and clinical skills education at the college (WAVE Program is modeled after the Human Willed Body Program at WesternU). More than 500 deceased animals have been donated to the college in the last two years. These special animals are providing a greater quality of education to future generations of veterinarians.

All donations to WAVE must be deceased due to age, serious illness or injury. An animal that has no owner to approve the donation of its remains will not be accepted. When you know that the death of your beloved pet might be imminent, and you live within 40 miles of the college, please ask your veterinarian about donating to WAVE. Your veterinarian may contact Ms. Tami Miller at (909) 469-5597 to make all arrangements.

Always in Our Hearts: Stories from WAVE appears as a regular feature in each issue of the Veterinary Outlook Magazine.

Establishing a Pet Trust

Those concerned about what will happen to their animals should their human caregivers become incapacitated or die might consider including provisions in an estate plan. One means of doing so is to establish a charitable remainder unitrust to ensure their care in the event disaster strikes. This can be easily accomplished, and WesternU’s Planned Giving Office is available to assist in this process. For more information, contact Tim McPherson, Director of Development at (909) 706-3762 or tmcpherson@westernu.edu.
Alumni Connection

Molly Ragusa Martony (DVM ’12) has been accepted at the University of Florida’s three-year aquatic animal residency program. This zoological residency with a strong aquatic animal focus accepts only one individual every three years. The first year is associated closely with the university and small aquatic facilities, the second year is entirely spent at Sea World Orlando, and the third year is a residency at a major zoo in the Orlando area.

Michelle Martony

In September, U.S. Army Capt. Jeremy Lewis, DVM ’10, a Veterinary Corps Officer out of the Public Health Command-Atlantic in Fort Bragg, N.C., won the 2017 Regional Health Command-Atlantic Best Medic Competition. The contest for participating teams included a physical fitness test, day and night land navigation, marching, shooting and a 12-mile foot march, combat water survival, and the M4 rifle and 9mm pistol stress shoot range.

Richard Wong, DVM ’10, now is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons – Small Animal, and is head of the surgical department at Wachusett Animal Hospital and Pet Retreat in Westminster, Mass.

Noah Pavlisko, DVM ’10, MS, an assistant professor of veterinary anesthesiology at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine’s Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, is now a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia & Analgesia.

Noah Pavlisko

http://www.alumni@westernu.edu

Mission Statement

THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

is committed to serving society and animals through the preparation of students for the practice of veterinary medicine, veterinary public health and/or veterinary research in an educational program of self-directed learning, reverence for life and clinical education through strategic partnerships.

Instruction and clinical opportunities are provided in a wide variety of domestic species, including food animal, equine, and companion animals.

The college sustains a vibrant diverse faculty by encouraging advancement through personal and professional development and research. This creates an environment of competent, caring, ethical professionals, where cooperative learning, public service and scholarship can flourish.

www.westernu.edu/veterinary

CVM Calendar

Dec. 22-Jan. 7  Winter recess
Jan. 5  National Bird Day
Jan. 15  Martin Luther King holiday
Feb. 18  World Whale Day
Feb. 19  President’s Day holiday
Feb. 22-25  Western Region Iverson Bell Summit hosted by WesternU
Feb. 27  World Spay Day

Veterinary Outlook 21
Parting Shot

If you’d like to have your horizontally formatted photo published in this space, please email high resolution versions only with a short descriptive paragraph to CVMOutlook@westernu.edu.

“In the hope of reaching the moon, men fail to see the flowers that blossom at their feet.” -- Albert Schweitzer

Photo by Paul Gordon-Ross, DVM, MS
Associate Professor/Director of Clinical Relations