Research Impacts
Health: From Fertility to Dog Flu

Meet 11 New Faculty Members

Illinois Students Get $730K in Scholarships
DEAN’S COLUMN

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Celebrating the Illinois Spirit

Our first annual DVM Fest was held shortly before graduation last May. A party for the Class of 2015, the event welcomed graduates to their new status as alumni and practitioners.

The college alumni association, the national and state veterinary medical associations, Merck, and our own referral hospital and diagnostic laboratory sponsored the event to launch new graduates’ careers and identities as veterinary Illini.

The Illinois veterinary degree, based on our unique and powerful integrated curriculum, gives graduating students greater confidence in their practice skills, as shown by responses to an exit survey. The first class educated under the new curriculum graduated in 2013. We believe an Illinois DVM will also give graduates a competitive edge in the marketplace.

The college is also celebrating the imminent completion of a $4 million renovation project to enhance instructional facilities. In our Basic Sciences Building, we will be adding student-focused collaborative learning spaces—the college’s first new classroom space since 1983, when our veterinary class size was 80, compared with more than 120 students today.

How confident are you entering your first position in veterinary medicine?

More DVM Fest photos on page 17

(On the cover) Orange and moo: A cow gets ready for her closeup with the public at the annual Vet Med Open House last October. Mark your calendar for the 2015 Open House on Sunday, October 4, from 10 am to 4 pm.

Photo credit: Nicole Moyer, Sweet Ellie Photography
Seasoned Leaders Take on New Hospital Roles

Veterinary oncologist Dr. Laura Garrett was recently selected by vote of the clinical faculty to serve as chief of staff of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. In this newly created position, Dr. Garrett chairs a hospital board comprised of section heads and two elected faculty members who assist in hospital governance, especially in matters related to patient care.

“As chief of staff I serve as a facilitator for the day-to-day work of the many people involved in the teaching hospital,” said Dr. Garrett. “My goal is to improve empathy between coworkers and lead groups toward more autonomous problem solving.”

Anna Lee Fenger, assistant dean for administration, has taken on the role of interim hospital administrator. She will oversee the operational and financial management of the hospital, assisted by a core team of staff members and technicians. Before Fenger joined the college in 2011, she served as chief strategy officer at OSF Healthcare System-Peoria, where she developed long-range strategic and financial plans for five acute-care hospitals.

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital introduced this new administrative model in May, after the retirement of hospital director Dr. Brendan McKiernan. Under this new structure, Dr. Garrett and Fenger work together under the direction of the head of the Department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine, Dr. Karen Campbell, who has authority over both the department and the hospital.

Dr. Garrett will continue to see cancer patients and engage in clinical oncology trials, and she recently added another role: coordinator of communications training. Dr. Garrett has been instrumental in incorporating communication skills into the Illinois veterinary curriculum since she joined the faculty in 2006. She completed the course to become a Bayer Animal Health Communication faculty member in 2007. Her communications role became official after the college’s new communications wing opened last fall in the Clinical Skill Learning Center.

Diagnoses Delivered Days Faster with MALDI Biotyper

A lung biopsy received in the afternoon was cultured overnight. By the next morning two types of pneumonia-causing bacteria had been identified as the source of the dead calf’s respiratory illness.

That’s one example of the speed and power available with the MALDI Biotyper, which was recently acquired by the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Urbana.

It is capable of matching microorganisms cultured from submissions against more than 5,600 distinct pathogens—bacteria, yeasts, and fungi—in the system’s database.

In the case of the calf, the new biotyper delivered findings two days sooner than was possible with methods previously used to type these pathogens. For some other types of cultures, the time to diagnosis has shrunk from over a week to one day.

“The MALDI Biotyper is a tremendous clinical tool for veterinarians who need to quickly make a diagnosis and treatment decision for infections in animal patients, herds, or flocks,” said Dr. Carol Maddox, professor and veterinary microbiologist.

The MALDI Biotyper is also very cost-effective, making its use feasible for analyzing large numbers of samples very precisely, such as in an epidemiological study.

The system also differentiates between anti-microbial resistant strains of bacteria and strains that are susceptible to antibiotics.
Students Delve into Zoo Med Before Graduating

Two weeklong “professional development” courses in April gave fourth-year students with an exotics interest a wide range of hands-on experience. This opportunity expands a long-standing partnership between the college and Wildlife Prairie Park, just west of Peoria, Ill. The April courses allow students to give annual wellness exams and preventative care to otters, eagles, and many other species. Previously the college brought students to vaccinate the elk and bison herds each fall, as well as to care for sick or injured resident animals. Drs. Julia Whittington, Kenneth Welle, and Matthew Allender led the course.

“Every day the students get a new experience,” Dr. Whittington said. “We may immobilize a cougar in the morning and examine frogs in the afternoon. The diversity is tremendous.”

Future DVMs of Illinois

In June Dr. Allan Paul, associate dean for public engagement, helped 23 Illinois high school students explore their interest in a veterinary degree through the Illini Summer Academies, a University of Illinois Extension 4-H program. A total of 300 4Hers were on campus for the weeklong program, which showcased 13 degree fields.
Emergency Response Training for Animal Rescue

Since 2012, Dr. Yvette Johnson-Walker, veterinary clinical medicine, has led training programs in emergency response for staff members at zoos, aquariums, and other accredited animal exhibitor institutions in 23 states.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and supported by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, Dr. Johnson-Walker and Dr. Yvonne Nadler, a project manager with the Zoo and Aquarium All Hazards Preparedness Response and Recovery Center, trained participants in basic preparedness skills, including the Incident Command System (ICS), a Department of Homeland Security organizational tool that allows for coordination and communication between first responders and other participants assisting with rescue, response, and recovery operations during an emergency.

More recently, Dr. Johnson-Walker has teamed up with Dr. Emily Lankau, (DVM IL ’11, PhD IL ’10), to deliver ICS training for animal rescue volunteers and animal shelter staff in South Carolina and Illinois.

“Many animal rescue organizations are now requiring ICS certification for their volunteers,” said Dr. Johnson-Walker. “With funding from Noah’s Wish, we were able to offer an interactive seminar at no charge that prepared participants to successfully complete an online certification exam.”

Ready for Takeoff

On June 19, Allie Urbanik (at right), Class of 2017 and co-manager of the Wildlife Medical Clinic, returned a red-tailed hawk to the location it was found, near Memorial Stadium, with the help of Meghan Armstrong, an undergraduate volunteer. The hawk, dehydrated and suffering from a parasitic infection, was brought to the clinic by campus police on June 2. For more than two weeks, clinic volunteers provided treatment for the infection and other supportive care leading to the hawk’s recovery.

Are You on Our Mailing List?

Don’t miss our monthly newsletter for practitioners, rvetILLINOIS. Recent issues have introduced new faculty members in cardiology and equine surgery, advised on managing geriatric weight loss in cats as well as feline diarrhea, and covered the latest in equine emergency care.

Contact Ginger Passalacqua, referral coordinator at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, at 217-333-5311 or VTHrDVMcoor@vetmed.illinois.edu to add your clinic to the list or to request a clinic visit.
Faculty Research Impacts Health in People, Pigs, Dogs, Dolphins, More

Through research and discovery, Illinois faculty members are making a difference in the health of animals, people, and the environment. Learn more about their work online at vetmed.illinois.edu/news/.

**Fighting Cancer in Pets and People**

In February a new drug, called PAC-1, entered phase I clinical trials in humans at the university’s Cancer Center in Chicago. PAC-1 is one of only a few drug agents developed and tested in animals and in humans at a single institution.

The drug showed promise in the treatment of pet dogs with spontaneously occurring cancers at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, where oncologist Dr. Tim Fan led clinical testing of the compound, which had been identified by Illinois chemistry professor Paul Hergenrother.

“[PAC-1] crosses the blood-brain barrier very well,” said Dr. Fan, noting that it is a good candidate for the treatment of brain cancer in humans and dogs.

In June Dr. Fan spoke in Washington, D.C., at a meeting sponsored by the National Cancer Policy Forum on the value of offering early cancer drug trials to pet dogs.

“We have a lot of dogs in the United States, approximately 70 million of them, and it’s believed that about 25 percent of pet dogs will develop some form of cancer in their lifetime,” he said.

“We’re using dogs to help guide drug development for people, but at the same time we’re offering new, innovative therapies that would otherwise never be available to dogs, to help them as well.”

**After 58 Years, a Trans Fat Ban**

Dr. Fred Kummerow first reported a link between dietary trans fats and heart disease in 1957. In 1968, he was instrumental in getting the trans fat content of margarines and shortening reduced from an average of 43 percent to 27 percent, a change that coincided with a decline in heart disease. Dr. Kummerow’s research in lipid biochemistry later elucidated the mechanisms by which trans fat contributes to atherosclerosis in patients with heart disease. Dr. Kummerow has an adjunct appointment in comparative biosciences.

**Dolphin Die-off Linked to BP Oil Spill**

Dr. Kathleen Colegrove, a faculty member at the college’s Chicago-based Zoological Pathology Program, was the lead veterinary pathologist on a study of dolphin deaths within the footprint of the Deepwater Horizon spill.

Led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, researchers from a dozen federal, state, academic, and private marine wildlife institutions evaluated tissues from dead dolphins stranded in the spill area and time frame as well as tissues from dolphins stranded on other coastal regions not related to the spill.

“We know that in other mammals, exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons can injure an animal’s lungs,” said Dr. Colegrove. “These chemicals also can undermine immune function, and this can increase susceptibility to bacterial pneumonia or other infections.”

Twenty-two percent of the dolphins from the study area had bacterial pneumonia. Many of these cases, about 50 percent, “were unusual in severity and caused or contributed to death,” the researchers said. Only 2 percent of dead dolphins found outside the spill zone had bacterial pneumonia.

“These dolphins had some of the most severe lung lesions I have seen in the 13-plus years that I have examined dead dolphin tissues from throughout the U.S.,” Dr. Colegrove said.
Chemicals in Plastics Reduce Fertility

Recent studies led by Dr. Jodi Flaws, comparative biosciences, as part of the Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Center, looked at the impact of two types of endocrine disruptors found widely in plastics.

In one study, when mice were exposed to bisphenol A (BPA), an industrial chemical found in plastic food and drink packaging and other products, at levels equivalent to those considered safe in humans, significant reproductive problems were observed in the next three generations of mice.

The third generation of mice—which was not directly exposed to BPA either as a fetus or as an egg in a fetus in its mother's womb—experienced later sexual maturity, reduced fertility, and lower pregnancy success than mice whose ancestors were not exposed to BPA. In this generation, the lowest dose of BPA exposure (given to their great-grandmothers) interfered most with their fertility.

Two other studies in mice looked at the role of the phthalate DEHP, a plasticizing agent used in auto upholstery, baby toys, building materials, and many other consumer products.

One found that exposing pregnant mice to DEHP increased the male-to-female sex ratio of their pups. Additionally, about one in four of those exposed to DEHP in the womb showed some reproductive dysfunction.

Another study revealed that DEHP disrupts the growth and function of follicles in the adult ovary.

Unlike most of the research conducted so far on the reproductive effects of phthalates, "our work has been to focus on the female and on environmentally relevant doses that people might see," said Dr. Flaws.

"Sometimes it's at the low doses that you have the most profound effects, and that's what we're seeing with the phthalates."

New Approach to Treating Endometriosis

Two new drug compounds—one of which has already proven useful in a mouse model of multiple sclerosis—appear to be effective in treating endometriosis, a disorder that, like MS, is driven by estrogen and inflammation, Illinois scientists reported recently.

Each drug reduced the size of endometriotic tissue or prevented its growth outside the uterus in mice. Each also reduced inflammation and suppressed the development of new neurons and blood vessels that support the misplaced tissue. The treatments did not reduce fertility or the health of pups born to mouse mothers that had undergone the therapies.

The interdisciplinary research team, which included Dr. CheMyong Ko, comparative biosciences, hopes the new compounds may eventually be used to treat a variety of disorders, from inflammatory breast cancer to cardiovascular and metabolic problems associated with obesity.

Advances in Equine Critical Care

Two veterinary emergency and critical care specialists, Drs. Maureen McMichael and Pamela Wilkins, found that the blood of horses differs substantially from that of humans and dogs when a diagnostic tool called thromboelastometry is used to assess the status of blood flow and coagulation.

Common equine diseases such as colic, colitis, endotoxemia, and sepsis are associated with blood coagulation abnormalities, so successful treatment requires knowing the patient’s blood clotting status.

“Our study showed that horse blood is stimulated to clot much more quickly outside the blood vessels than is the blood of dogs or humans,” said Dr. Wilkins.

This research showed conclusively that, to obtain accurate results from thromboelastometry studies in horses, a profound outside stimulation is required when recalcified blood is used.
Canine Influenza Strains Compared

“One of the first questions veterinarians had about this outbreak was whether the canine influenza vaccines available in the United States would protect against the newly emerged strain,” said Dr. Gail Scherba, pathobiology, referring to the discovery that the H3N2 flu strain was to blame for sickening more than 1,000 Chicago-area dogs.

To address that question, Dr. Scherba led a team at Illinois that isolated the H3 sequence from the new strain and compared it with H3 sequences available in an influenza gene bank, representing 15 isolates of the H3N8 strain that the existing vaccines protect against.

“The H3 protein of the recent isolate was only approximately 85 percent identical to the H3 proteins from the H3N8 strains,” concluded Dr. Scherba.

Protein modeling of the H3 sequences revealed that differences were distributed across the surface of the H3 protein, suggesting that the current H3N8 vaccine may not be effective in protecting against the new H3N2 strain.

A Faster Way to Diagnose Kennel Cough

“Kennel cough” is a broad term for highly infectious upper respiratory disease in dogs. The cause could be viral, bacterial, or a combination of these.

Dr. Elizabeth Driskell, pathobiology, is looking for better methods of early, on-site detection of canine influenza virus, so veterinarians can make a diagnosis when they first see the patient instead of sending a sample to a distant lab and waiting days for results.

The recent Chicago outbreak provided an opportunity to gather samples for her research, which focuses on host responses as a way to diagnose canine influenza.

“The host responds to bacteria and individual viruses differently. If veterinarians can detect a viral infection earlier, they can make effective prevention and treatment choices sooner,” Dr. Driskell said.

“If veterinarians can detect a viral infection earlier, they can make effective prevention and treatment choices sooner,”

Getting a Handle on African Swine Fever

In domestic pigs, African swine fever (ASF) is highly contagious and nearly always fatal—and there is no vaccine to prevent it. It is near the top of the list of animal diseases that global agricultural organizations are seeking to prevent or control.

The ASF virus is very complicated, with more than 160 genes encoding many proteins. Dr. Daniel Rock, pathobiology, working with collaborators in Connecticut, Nebraska, and Russia, recently identified two membrane proteins of the ASF virus that are responsible for serologic specificity.

“We found that the ASF virus membrane proteins CD2v and C-type lectin were both necessary for specificity of the virus. They can be used by researchers to differentiate among strains of the virus, a much simpler method of identification than was previously possible with ASF,” explained Dr. Rock.

“Now that we have this information, these proteins are strong candidates for being protective antigens for ASF, and bring us one step closer to design of a vaccine.”

FACULTY IMPACT

“If veterinarians can detect a viral infection earlier, they can make effective prevention and treatment choices sooner,”
Herp Health Matters

Researchers have developed a faster and more accurate way to test for infection with *Ophidiomyces ophiodiicola*, a fungus that is killing snakes in the Midwest and eastern United States and is remarkably similar in its basic biology to white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that has killed over 6 million bats.

“Now we can identify the infections earlier, we can intervene earlier and we can potentially increase our success of treatment or therapy,” said Dr. Matthew Allender, veterinary clinical medicine.

The new test uses quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR), which is more than 1,000 times more sensitive than conventional PCR.

Through a conservation network called Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Dr. Allender is also co-chairing a team of biologists, veterinarians, and wildlife managers to facilitate communication and collaborative response to outbreaks of disease among native herpetofauna: frogs, salamanders, snakes, lizards, and turtles. Team members work in government agencies, private organizations, universities, and zoos throughout North America.

Muskrats, Minks Harbor Toxoplasmosis

Dr. Mark Mitchell, veterinary clinical medicine, was part of a study that found antibodies for *Toxoplasma gondii*, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis, in 18 of 30 muskrats and 20 of 26 minks tested for the disease in central Illinois.

The parasite requires a feline host: only in the cat can it reproduce and form new oocysts, which are shed in the feces and go on to infect new hosts.

“This parasite’s goal in life is to get back into a cat,” said Dr. Mitchell, who has traced toxoplasmosis infection in wildlife as far afield as the Galapagos Islands, where cats were introduced in the 16th century.

The researchers suspected that the widespread use of tile drainage systems in central Illinois and the lack of natural wetlands to filter out pathogens such as the *T. gondii* oocysts would allow the parasite to be washed directly into waterways.

In humans, toxoplasmosis infection has been correlatively linked to miscarriage, autism, depression, schizophrenia, increased suicide risk, and decreased learning in children.

TB Test for Elephants

More than 50 elephants in captivity in the U.S. have been diagnosed with tuberculosis since 1994, but infected elephants may appear healthy or show only general signs, such as weight loss. Current diagnostic approaches require weeks to culture the mycobacteria and may indicate only exposure to, rather than infection with, the pathogen.

Dr. Jennifer Landolfi, a Zoological Pathology Program faculty member, led a study to develop a diagnostic tool that detects cytokine messenger RNA in elephants. This tool appeared to correctly differentiate between eight TB-positive and eight TB-negative Asian elephants.

If confirmed in future studies, this approach may provide a faster and more reliable way to diagnose TB in captive elephants.

Toward a Vaccine for PRRS, and More

Dr. Dongwan Yoo, pathobiology, is one of the world’s foremost authorities on the porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) virus. PRRS takes a big toll economically in pig-producing countries worldwide. In the United States alone, PRRS causes losses estimated at $660 million per year.

Using reverse genetics, Dr. Yoo’s research team engineered mutant viruses to investigate the role that individual viral proteins play during infection. They identified several proteins in the PRRS virus that aid in interferon suppression, meaning that these proteins somehow suppress the body’s immune response during infection.

Recently, Dr. Yoo and his team expanded their study to include related viruses affecting horses, mice, and simians. They found that non-structural protein 1, which plays the biggest role in interferon suppression in the PRRS virus, also inhibited the cells’ interferon production in these related viruses.

Although the mechanism of action for interferon suppression differed among the four viruses, their findings “may become the basis for future vaccine development, not only for PRRS but also for related viruses,” said Dr. Yoo.
New Faces

Igor Canisso  
Assistant Professor, Veterinary Clinical Medicine  
■ DVM, Federal University of Paraná College of Veterinary Medicine, Brazil  
■ MSc, Federal University of Viçosa, Brazil  
■ Theriogenology Residency, Cornell University  
■ PhD, Equine Reproduction, University of Kentucky  
■ Diplomate, American College of Theriogenologists (Animal Reproduction)  
■ Diplomate, European College of Animal Reproduction (Equine Reproduction)

Research interests: All aspects of equine reproduction with emphasis in two major fields: Semen biotechnology and testicular function in stallions; equine perinatology: pregnancy loss, diagnosis and treatment

Ryan Fries  
Clinical Assistant Professor, Veterinary Clinical Medicine  
■ DVM, Ross University  
■ Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Internship, The Ohio State University  
■ Cardiology Residency, Texas A&M University  
■ Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (Cardiology)

Research interests: Advanced cardiac imaging, interventional procedures, canine chronic valvular disease and clinical trials

Brett Grossman  
Instructor, Chicago Center for Veterinary Medicine  
■ DVM, Western University of Health Sciences  
■ Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Internship, Carolina Veterinary Specialists

Before joining the college’s Medical District Veterinary Clinic at Illinois, Dr. Grossman provided emergency veterinary care in the Chicago area for several years.

Katherine Kling  
Instructor, Veterinary Clinical Medicine  
■ DVM, Ross University  
Dr. Kling practiced in AAHA-accredited primary care clinics in Ohio and Texas for seven years before joining the Illinois faculty, where she has focused on dental services.

Fabio Lima  
Assistant Professor, Veterinary Clinical Medicine  
■ DVM, São Paulo State University, Brazil  
■ MS, University of Florida  
■ Postdoctoral associate, Cornell University

Research interests: Bovine theriogenology with emphases on reproductive management, physiology, uterine immunobiology and microbiology of the bovine; Interactions among reproduction, nutrition, health and immunology in cattle.

Bianca da Costa Martins  
Assistant Professor, Veterinary Clinical Medicine  
■ DVM, São Paulo State University, Jaboticabal, São Paulo, Brazil  
■ PhD, São Paulo State University, Jaboticabal, São Paulo, Brazil  
■ Residency in Comparative Veterinary Ophthalmology, University of Florida

Research interests: Deep anterior lamellar keratoplasty in horses, dogs with senile cataracts

Annette McCoy  
Assistant Professor, Veterinary Clinical Medicine  
■ PhD, Comparative and Molecular Biosciences, University of Minnesota  
■ MS and Equine Surgery and Lameness Residency, Colorado State University  
■ Large Animal Medicine and Surgery Internship, University of Minnesota  
■ DVM, Michigan State University  
■ Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Surgeons

Academic interests: Equine surgery and lameness; genetic susceptibility/risk factors for orthopedic diseases in horses

Kimberly Pattullo  
Clinical Instructor, Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory  
■ DVM, Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada  
■ MVS and Clinical Pathology Residency, Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon  
■ Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Pathology

Jason Pieper  
Clinical Assistant Professor, Veterinary Clinical Medicine  
■ DVM, Iowa State University  
■ Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Internship, VCA Aurora and Berwyn Animal Hospitals  
■ Dermatology Internship, Animal Dermatology Service  
■ Dermatology Residency, University of Illinois

Clinical interests: Food allergy dermatitis, atopic dermatitis, wound healing with the aid of platelet rich plasma, pharmacokinetic interaction of fluconazole and cyclosporine

Rebecca Smith  
Assistant Professor, Pathobiology  
■ PhD in Epidemiology, Cornell University  
■ MS in Biosecurity and Risk Analysis, Kansas State University  
■ DVM, Cornell University

Research interests: Infectious disease control, including mathematical modeling of infectious diseases and model parameterization; economics of livestock disease and optimization of disease control; mycobacterial disease control

Ashlee Urbasic  
Visiting Clinical Instructor, Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory  
■ DVM, University of Illinois  
■ MVS and Clinical Pathology, Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon  
■ Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Pathology

Dr. Urbasic oversees the diagnostic testing, including cytology, chemistry, hematology, urinalysis, and more at the laboratory’s satellite location in Buffalo Grove, Ill.
Retirements

Global Researcher, Educator Retires

Known for her research in diabetes and obesity, especially in the cat, Dr. Margarethe Hoenig has held leadership roles in the Society for Comparative Endocrinology and was recognized with the 2014 Oxford Laboratories Award and the 2013 James G. Morris Lectureship in Companion Animal Nutrition at the University of California-Davis, among other awards.

Dr. Hoenig visits with schoolchildren in a village in Tanzania, during a spay/neuter study abroad trip in July 2013.

At Illinois Dr. Hoenig shared her global perspectives by creating the international study program at the college. She led students on trips to her native Germany to learn about veterinarians’ role in public health promotion in the European Union, to China to study veterinary acupuncture in Beijing, and to the east African nation of Tanzania to spay and neuter dogs in rural communities.

Dr. Hoenig remains a professor emerita in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine.

The Art of Informatics

Dr. Arthur Siegel earned a veterinary degree at Illinois in 1984 and, after completing master’s degree studies at Colorado State University, returned to Illinois for a PhD. Dr. Siegel became a leader in the field of veterinary medical informatics. A clinical assistant professor in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine, he served the Veterinary Teaching Hospital as assistant director and as director of medical informatics.

He also served as president of the Veterinary Medical Database, the world’s largest veterinary medical data repository, and was instrumental in implementing SNOMED—Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine—terminology to make the database accessible for epidemiological studies of animal diseases, problems, and procedures in the United States and Canada.

Respiratory Expert Led Hospital

Alumni may remember Dr. Brendan McKiernan as an exacting, gifted, and ponytailed specialist in small animal internal medicine who served on the faculty between 1974 and 1998. In 2011, Dr. McKiernan returned to Illinois as hospital director, after spending 13 years in private specialty practices in Colorado and Oregon.

Hospital director Dr. Brendan McKiernan, left, confers with Shimur Ahmed, customer service representative, at the reception desk in the Small Animal Clinic.

During Dr. McKiernan’s tenure as hospital director, two clinical specialties that had been absent were restored when a boarded neurologist, Dr. Devon Hague, and a boarded cardiologist, Dr. Ryan Fries, joined the faculty. Dr. McKiernan also oversaw enhanced communications efforts with referring veterinarians, including implementing satisfaction surveys, hiring Ginger Passalacqua as a referral coordinator, and launching rvetILLINOIS, a monthly newsletter for referrers.

Mentor, Scholar Honored

On September 16, a mini-symposium recognized highlights from nearly three decades of teaching, research, and service at the college by Dr. Matthew Wallig, who retired last year.

The recipient of mentoring awards from two national organizations in his field, Dr. Wallig established the Illinois Student Chapter of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists, mentored over 50 veterinary pathologists during their residencies, and served on over 70 doctoral and master’s degree graduate committees.

He also collaborated across a wide spectrum of research, including in nutritional sciences, and served as a co-editor of the Handbook of Toxicologic Pathology (three editions and three volumes) and Fundamentals of Toxicologic Pathology.

Dr. Wallig remains active at the college as professor emeritus in pathobiology.
**Signs of Success**

**Campuswide Recognition**

Two civil service employees in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital were among the eight staff members across the Urbana campus who were honored with the 2015 Chancellor’s Distinguished Staff Award. The award recognizes exceptional performance.  

Jessica Risley is a veterinary technician specialist in anesthesiology and pain management.  

Brian Woller is a laboratory animal caretaker responsible for the overall care of small pets, horses, cattle, and other farm animals.

**It Happened in Vegas**

Two members of the Illinois community were honored at the Western Veterinary Conference held in Las Vegas, Nev., in February.  

Dr. Ann Johnson, professor emerita, received the Special Recognition Award, presented by Dr. George Dyck, WVC president, for more than a decade of active service to the organization and its board, including serving as its first female president.  

Amelia Gould, Class of 2016, shown with Dean Peter Constable, was the Illinois student recipient of the Dr. Jack Walther Leadership Award, recognizing veterinary students who portray leadership and promote a lifelong professional service.

**College Excellence Awards**

Ten faculty and staff members and one graduate student were recognized on September 23.  

Dr. Tim Fan, veterinary clinical medicine, received the Dr. Gordon and Mrs. Helen Kruger All-Around Excellence Award for a faculty member who demonstrates excellence in teaching, research, and service.  

Dr. Fan also received the Zoetis Animal Health Award for Research Excellence, presented to a current faculty member who has attained national recognition.  

Dr. Eric Vimr, pathobiology, received the Kruger Research Excellence Award in recognition of quality and quantity of publications, research awards, and outside recognition of the nominee’s work.  

Dr. Marcella Ridgway, clinical associate professor in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine, received the Kruger Service Excellence Award for outstanding committee work, clinical service, and continuing education.  

Dr. Danielle Merema, veterinary clinical medicine, received the Kruger Teaching Excellence Award for presenting material with enthusiasm, dedication, clarity, and creativity.  

Dr. Matthew Allender, comparative biosciences, Dr. Anne Barger, pathobiology, and Dr. Brian Aldridge, veterinary clinical medicine, were the recipients of the Dr. Erwin Small Teaching Excellence Awards in Veterinary Medicine, chosen by third- and fourth-year veterinary students.  

Dr. Samantha Middleton, small animal internal medicine resident, received the Dr. Walter E. Hoffmann and Dr. Ann L. Johnson Resident Teaching Excellence Award for an outstanding graduate student or resident in training for an AVMA-recognized specialty board.  

Dr. Susan Steenbergen, pathobiology, received the Terry and Judy Rathgeber Academic Professional Excellence Award for outstanding performance.  

Sandy Grable, Veterinary Teaching Hospital, received the Seets Staff Excellence Award for demonstrated excellence in job performance and service.  

Connie Arnold, Clinical Skills Learning Center, received the Dr. Robert and Lucy Graham Award for a staff member who has made outstanding contributions. Arnold retired at the end of June after more than 30 years on staff at the college.
Dr. Sarah Allison, a clinical assistant professor at the college and assistant director for the campus Division of Animal Resources, spent five weeks in Washington, D.C., this spring as the first on-site Public Policy Fellows, a new program of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC).

Dr. Allison, a 2001 graduate of the college, developed leadership skills in the advocacy arena and learned about the legislative and regulatory process at the federal level. She met with lots of federal agency officials and policymakers, advocacy leaders from non-profit organizations, and legislators, including fellow Illini Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR5), a 1977 alumnus.

As a veterinarian who is board certified by the American College of Laboratory Medicine, Dr. Allison has a special interest in National Institutes of Health funding for biomedical research.

“I think it’s so important to advocate for increased funding for research and education,” she said. “The next great breakthroughs are going to come from today’s students and we need to make sure that they have all of the opportunities and resources that they need.”

—Excerpted from reporting by Jeanne Johnson, AAVMC

Dr. Santiago Gutierrez-Nibeyro recently received board certification in Equine Sport Medicine and Rehabilitation from the American College of Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Surendra Karki, pathobiology, received a Research Award in Climate Change and Public Health from campus sustainability and environmental programs to study the role of weather patterns on abundance of vector mosquitoes in a West Nile virus hotspot.

Dr. Aditi Das, comparative biosciences, won an American Heart Association grant that supports highly promising beginning scientists for her research linking dietary omega-3 fatty acids and cardiovascular health.
Dr. Sidonie Lavergne, comparative biosciences, received the 2015 Teaching Award from the American Academy of Veterinary Pharmacology & Therapeutics.

Dr. Matthew Wallig, professor emeritus in pathobiology, recently achieved Diplomate status in that organization.

Dr. Maria Bates, Jennifer Eberly, and Katherine Schlicher (shown above) and Drs. Caroline Chu and Ashley DeFrancisco passed phase I of the board certification examination for the American College of Veterinary Pathologists. Dr. Kim Pattullo, pathobiology, recently achieved Diplomate status in that organization.

Cari Rasmussen, Class of 2015, spent 12 days in the high-volume surgery department of the veterinary hospital at the University of São Paulo in Brazil as part of her “professional development” period before graduation. She reported, “I was immersed in another culture, another language, and another viewpoint of veterinary medicine.”

Susan Zelasko, an undergradate student who works for Aditi Das, comparative biosciences, was awarded a U.S. Fulbright Scholar Program grant to conduct research on novel therapeutic treatments for antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections at the Ludwik Hirszfeld Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy in Wroclaw, Poland.

Illinois Veterinary Student Successes

Matt Holland, Class of 2017 (at right, with past and current SAVMA presidents Ricci Karkula, Texas A&M, and Jessica Carie, Colorado State University), was chosen as president-elect of the Student American Veterinary Medical Association. He will take office as president in 2016.

Brigitte Mason, Class of 2017, received an Elanco Animal Health scholarship for her oral presentation at the American Association of Swine Veterinarians annual meeting. Six Illinois students presented posters at AASV: Natalie Didier, Brittany Farron, Henry Johnson, Mackenzie Kelling, Mara Nix, and Amy Sneed.

Lauren Kane, Class of 2016, won second place in the student presentation competition at the annual conference of the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians in Orlando in October.

Kelly Rockwell, Class of 2017, presented her research findings on leptospirosis and Blanding’s turtles at the International Conference on Avian Herpetological and Exotic Mammal Medicine in Paris in April 2015.

Follow our new blog to hear from Holland and other Illinois students: go.illinois.edu/vetmedblogs
It’s not uncommon for the clinicians, staff, and students in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital to be recognized by grateful clients for heroic efforts and super care of animal patients, but recently nearly everyone in the hospital put their inner superhero on display.

The hospital proclaimed June 3 “Superhero Day” to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the sudden death of Ian Wagner, the four-year-old son of imaging technician Caroline Wagner and her husband Wayne.

Wearing superhero garb reflected Ian’s fascination with these characters, and, on a deeper level, acknowledged the ways Ian had made the world a better place while inspiring others to do the same.

Even a few patients and clients participated in the event to celebrate Ian’s courageous spirit.
Making Connections

By Brenda Betts

What’s your connection to Vet Med?
Are you an animal lover who is passionate about the life-saving care delivered at our hospital? Were you a student who will always feel indebted to certain faculty members who changed your outlook? Or someone who wants to enable aspiring veterinarians to realize their dreams of entering practice?

Whatever your motivation, there are friendly staff members in the college’s advancement office working to keep you and other alumni, donors, and friends connected with the college.

Last fall, the alumni association board honored Beth Erwin, who had recently retired from the advancement office, with a Special Service Award for her 30+ years of assisting donors and alumni. Like the board, I am grateful to Beth for all she has done for the college.

Many Reasons to Celebrate Scholarship Recipients and Donors

Nearly 200 donors, faculty members, award winners, and their guests gathered on May 2 to celebrate nearly $732,000 in financial support awarded through 262 student scholarships.

Speakers included Dr. Bill Augustine, president of the college’s alumni association; Dr. Steve Fisher, who founded the Dr. Joseph L. Dorner Award for Excellence in Veterinary Clinical Pathology; and Dr. Stuart Clark-Price, veterinary clinical medicine, who established the Stafford Clark-Price Memorial Feline Compassion Award. Dr. Mike Biehl, comparative biosciences, led the induction of 18 fourth-year students and 11 third-year students into the Phi Zeta veterinary honor fraternity.

Marcus Wisniewski, a member of the Class of 2016 from Belleville, Wis., who plans to pursue a residency in equine internal medicine, thanked donors on behalf of all student scholarship recipients. Excerpts from his remarks follow.

$49,140.
This was the cost of tuition and fees for an out-of-state student for the 2014–2015 school year—not including room and board, books and supplies, and other expenses.

As many veterinary students do, I have borrowed money from the government each year to cover the ever-rising costs of education.

Fortunately, we have access to scholarships, wonderful opportunities to alleviate the financial burden we face after graduation. It is through your generous contributions as donors that the goals and dreams fostered by veterinary students are nurtured.

To my fellow students, treasure this journey. The journey to becoming a DVM will fly by, and after that will begin a lifelong adventure of highs and lows, of great joy as well as inevitable loss. Keep a level head at the sacrifices you’ve made. Never give up. Never lose your compassion for others and for all creatures great and small.

To the donors, thank you for your continued belief in the veterinary profession, in the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois, and in the students such as myself who will be entering this exciting profession with a greatly reduced financial burden due to your generosity and support.

Over the past year, three new staff members have replaced departing members of the advancement team.

Our team is here to empower your connection to the college, whether that entails coming back for Fall Conference, alumni awards, and the annual golf outing, or whether you want support current students and faculty through your gifts to the college.

We look forward to meeting you at alumni receptions at veterinary meetings throughout the year, visiting you in your home or workplace, or hosting your visit to campus. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the advancement staff to find out more about connecting with the college.

Five new scholarships were awarded this year:

- Class of 1955 Endowed Scholarship
- Class of 1956 Endowed Scholarship
- Mary J. Demmon Private Foundation Scholarship
- Rick and Loan Hill Veterinary Medicine Chicago-Area Scholarship
- The Dr. Gene Gambrel Northern Illinois Veterinary Medical Association Scholarship
Donors Joe Martocchio and Brad Olson flank Marcus Wisniewski, Class of 2016 (holding scholarship), recipient of the Lundy Scholarship, and Wisniewski’s fiancé, Gabe Wand.

Dr. Rosemary LoGiudice hugs Justina Koehler and Steven Zachar, both Class of 2016, recipients of the American Veterinary Medical Association Professional Liabilities Insurance Trust Scholarship.

Dr. Steve and Mrs. Nanci Fisher pose with the recipient of the Joseph L. Dorner Award, Mike Rosser, Class of 2015, and his partner Amanda Perez.

Jean Rehn, left, with Nicole Bell, Class of 2016, recipient of the scholarship established in memory of Jean’s husband, Dr. J. Wayne Rehn.

Andrew Lee, Class of 2017, received the inaugural award of the Rick and Loan Hill Veterinary Medicine Chicago-Area Scholarship.

Dr. Joseph L. Dorner, who served the college for more than 25 years as a professor of clinical pathology and associate dean for student and academic affairs, died on December 19, 2014.

Dr. Dorner was acknowledged as a leader in educational reform at the college, introducing problem-solving learning techniques into his courses and routinely integrating materials from other courses into his clinical pathology classroom.

He won the 1972 Norden Outstanding Teacher Award, the 1973 Alumni Award of Merit, and the 1992 campus Award for Excellence in Graduate and Professional Teaching. He earned his bachelor’s, veterinary, master’s, and PhD degrees at Illinois.

To make a memorial gift to the college in support of the Joseph L. Dorner Award for Excellence in Veterinary Clinical Pathology, please call 217-333-2761 or give online at vetmed.illinois.edu.
More photos from our first annual DVM Fest, a party for the graduating class. See the inside front cover for additional photos.
Message from the Alumni Association President

Did you realize you are part of a network of over 5,500 Illini veterinarians? All alumni of the College of Veterinary Medicine are automatically members of the Veterinary Medical Alumni Association, and all alumni are needed! Get involved in whatever way suits you best: volunteer to serve on a board committee, mentor students in your area of practice, attend alumni receptions and class reunions, and keep in touch with us.

And for the latest news about your classmates and your college, be sure to like the alumni Facebook page—facebook.com/Illinoisvetmedalumni—and follow the college’s other social media feeds.

Always orange and blue,
Dr. Bill Augustine, ’75

Meet Your Alumni Association Board

Interested in serving on the Board? Please call Mindy Spencer at 217-333-1813.

Officers
Past-President: JB Bruederle, ’91
President: Bill Augustine, ’75
President-Elect: Lynne White-Shim, ’06
Executive Secretary: Allan Paul, ’77

Board Members
Faculty Alumnus: Matthew Allender, ’04
Companion Animal Practice: Chris Dupuis, ’03
Food Animal Practice: Joe Rudolphi, ’77
Out-of-State: Rob Swinger, ’03
Region 1 (Southern): vacant
Region 2 (Central): vacant
Region 3 (Eastern): Wes Bieritz, ’63; Doreen Turner, ’09
Region 4 (Mississippi Valley): vacant
Region 5 (Kankakee Valley): vacant
Region 6 (Northern): Craig Stevenson, ’74
Region 7 (Chicago): Roger Dupuis, ’71

Student Reps
Melissa Conrad, Class of 2015
Angela Mitas, Class of 2016
Christine Lamont, Class of 2017
Brittany Willeford, Class of 2018

Ex-officio
Peter Constable, dean
Brenda Betts, associate dean for advancement

Alumni Relations Liaison
Mindy Spencer, associate director for alumni relations and special events

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Recognizing Outstanding Contributions to the College

The college and its alumni association conferred four Dr. Erwin Small Distinguished Alumni Awards and two Special Service Awards at the 2014 Fall Conference for Veterinarians.

Alumni Awards

■ Dr. Lloyd Helper (IL DVM ’55, MS ’61), now an emeritus professor at the college, was part of the faculty for 38 years, including 11 years as the associate dean for academic and student affairs. He was a charter diplomate of American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists and served as its president, as well as president of the American Society for Veterinary Ophthalmology, and the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association.

■ Dr. Linda K. Tollefson (IL DVM ’80; Johns Hopkins MPH ’84) devoted her career to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, ultimately serving as associate commissioner for Foods and Veterinary Medicine from 2012 to 2014. She was the first female veterinarian in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps to reach the rank of Rear Admiral (Assistant Surgeon General).

■ Dr. Richard F. Wallin (IL DVM ’63, PhD ’66) served as scientific director, CEO, and chairman of the board at North American Science Associates (NAMSA). He also worked to develop anticonvulsants and inhalational anesthetics, including sevoflurane.

■ Dr. William H. Wright (IL DVM ’66), practitioner and partner at Capitol Illini Veterinary Services, in Springfield, Ill., practiced advanced orthopedic medicine and surgery and played important roles in the Illinois State and American veterinary medical associations.

Drs. Richard Wallin, Lloyd Helper, and William Wright are flanked by Dean Peter Constable and alumni association president Bill Augustine.

Service Awards

■ Dr. Herbert E. Whiteley (Purdue DVM ’77; CSU PhD ’84), professor at the University of Illinois, fostered tremendous innovations as the sixth dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, from 2001 to 2013. Among these are the groundbreaking veterinary curriculum and the Chicago Center for Veterinary Medicine.

■ Elizabeth B. Erwin, who retired in 2014 as coordinator for special events and alumni relations after almost 30 years of service to the College of Veterinary Medicine, served as the college’s liaison to its alumni association board, which nominated her for the award.

Announcing the 2015 College and Alumni Association Award Winners

Join us on September 17 for the evening Fall Conference awards banquet as these outstanding individuals receive awards from the college and its alumni association:

Dr. Erwin Small Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients

■ Dr. Wayne Anderson, cofounder of Arizona Pet Vet, an association of animal hospitals in the Phoenix, Ariz., area

■ Dr. Maureen Birmingham, World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization representative to Mexico

■ Dr. Clyde Dunphy, partner in Capitol Illini Veterinary Services, Springfield and Chatham, Illinois

■ Dr. Gail Golab, director of the Division of Animal Welfare, American Veterinary Medical Association

Special Service Award Recipient

■ Dr. Ann L. Johnson, professor emerita, University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine
Registration is open! Visit: go.illinois.edu/FallConference

Early registration discount ends August 31.

- New iHotel location features lots of parking and proximity to the college
- 8 tracks with more than 70 practice-relevant sessions, including three hands-on wet labs
- More than 40 presenters; meet new clinical faculty experts in cardiology, ophthalmology, dermatology, equine surgery, and equine and bovine reproduction
- Lots of opportunities to reconnect with classmates, clinicians, and colleagues

Thank you, Fall Conference sponsors!
Zoetis, Boehringer Ingelheim, IDEXX, Storz, Elanco, Class of 1962 Endowment Fund, Dr. LeRoy G. Biehl Endowment Fund, Sidney Krock Radiology Lectureship Fund

Fall Conference at a Glance

**Wednesday, Sept. 16**
- Pre-Conference National Veterinary Accreditation Program Sessions* with Dr. Susie Hexum; 1–5 pm

**Thursday, Sept. 17**
- Educational sessions in Business Management, Equine, Ophthalmology, Small Animal (four tracks); 9 am–5 pm
- Respiratory Endoscopy Workshop* with Drs. Gerhard Oechtering and Brendan McKiernan; 9:30 am–4 pm
- Non-Surgical Neutering Workshop* with Dr. Bob Weedon; 1:30–4:30 pm
- Alumni Celebration and Awards Dinner; 5–7:30 pm

**Friday, Sept. 18**
- Educational sessions in Food Animal, Exotics, Oncology, Surgery, Small Animal (two tracks); 8 am–2:50 pm
- Stallion Management Workshop* with Dr. Igor Canisso; 8:30–11:30 am
- Class Reunion Kick-Off; 3:30 pm

**Saturday, Sept. 19**
- Veterinary Medical Alumni Association Golf Outing* at Lake of the Woods Golf Course, Mahomet, III.; 9 am

*Additional registration required
**September**
17–18  Fall Conference for Veterinarians, Champaign, Ill.
17    College/Alumni Association Awards dinner, Champaign, Ill.
18    Class Reunion Kickoff Event, Champaign, Ill.
19    Veterinary Medical Alumni Association Golf Outing, Mahomet, Ill.

**October**
4    Vet Med Open House, Urbana, Ill.
18    Alumni and Friends Reception at the joint meeting of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists, American Society for Veterinary Clinical Pathology, and Society of Toxicologic Pathology, Minneapolis, Minn.
23    Milestone Reunion for those Celebrating 40th to 60th Reunions (Classes of ’55, ’60, ’65, ’70, and ’75), Urbana, Ill.

**December**
7    Alumni and Friends Reception at the American Association of Equine Practitioners National Meeting, Las Vegas, Nev.

**January 2016**
17    Alumni and Friends Reception at the North American Veterinary Conference, Orlando, Fla.

**March 2016**
7    Alumni and Friends Reception at the Western Veterinary Conference, Las Vegas, Nev.

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**Hit the green for a good cause on Sept. 19**

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*Printed with soy ink.*
Illinois students hit the road in style earlier this year in a new mobile surgical unit funded through a grant from PetSmart Charities.

“The mobile unit is important for assisting shelters that do not have a facility adequate for surgeries,” said Dr. Bob Weedon, director of the college’s shelter medicine program. “We can be much more efficient now that we don’t have to set up surgical facilities at each different location.”

Students benefit greatly from the experience provided through the shelter medicine program, and so do area pets. Compared with about 1,000 pets sterilized through the program in the 2011–12 academic year, Dr. Weedon said the program is “on pace to top 4,000 animals sterilized” in the year ending this August.

To support the Illinois shelter medicine program with contributions, call Brenda Betts, associate dean for advancement, at 217-333-5545.