

## Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

# Veterinary Education, Grenada Style

By Dr. Donald F. Smith  
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Two decades after Charles Modica established a medical school on the island of Grenada, he added a School of Veterinary Medicine to his thriving campus, which by then included degree programs in nursing, public health, graduate studies and business administration. In 2011, the School of Veterinary Medicine at St. George's University was accredited by the AVMA's Council on Education.

St. George's admits two classes per year of about 100 students each and provides traditional summer breaks. Students spend the equivalent of their first three years at the island location, then complete their fourth-year clinical year at an AVMA-accredited college, usually in the United States.

St. George's students reflect an unusually robust geographic diversity. A substantial proportion of students is admitted from New York and the Northeastern corridor as well as other of the more populous states of California, Florida and Illinois, but it is not uncommon to see representation from less populated states without veterinary colleges or contracts with established colleges. There is also a significant contingent from Canada, other Caribbean Islands, South America and Africa. This "global" community is a feature across the university, and is consistently acclaimed by Chancellor Modica in his address to each incoming veterinary class.

When Dr. Ray Sis arrived in Grenada as professor of Anatomy in August 2001, he joined a young veterinary program with inaugural dean, David Hogg, who had established the School in 1999. In 2003, Sis became the second dean of the school. A 1957 Kansas State alumnus of considerable veterinary and administrative experience, he was a perfect fit for the young school, shepherding the DVM and graduate degree program through an impressive period of maturation and growth.

He recruited sufficient faculty so that the veterinary program would provide instruction for all of the first-, second- and third-year curricula, and expanded clinical sites for fourth-year rotations to 24 US and six foreign colleges. He enhanced a system of visiting professors, often distinguished senior faculty from international colleges, who delivered important parts of the curriculum and provided guidance in research and graduate education. They also contributed expert advice toward achieving the goal of accreditation.

A priority that unites the health sciences components of the campus and gains momentum

each year is St. George's interpretation of One Health One Medicine. Seven years ago, a third-year student named Brittany King was performing a community rabies vaccination clinic with other veterinary students when the mother of a child who had brought her dog for vaccination scolded the students for preferentially caring for animals over the community's children. With the support of Dean Sis, King met with students from the human medical college and together they organized a combined veterinary medical and human medical community care clinic for pets and children. As the program grew, public health undergraduate students were also drawn into the program.

Students from the three health sciences schools began a semiannual community clinic covering several aspects of the human-animal relationship, from animal vaccinations, to common zoonotic disease prevention in children, to nutritional counseling. The program continued after King, now a veterinarian working in a multi-doctor practice in Texas, graduated in 2010. The success of one critical public health aspect of the program (rabies control) was honored in early 2015 by the awarding of the Global One Health Challenge prize, sponsored by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control.



*Dean Timothy Ogilvie, DVM, MSc, LL.D, Diplomate ACVIM*  
(Photo by Julie Kumble, 2015)

Canadian Dr. Tim Ogilvie, a graduate of the Ontario Veterinary College and former dean at the Atlantic Veterinary College, is the current dean. An accomplished large animal internist with extensive administrative experience, including serving as president of the Canadian VMA, and blessed with a bright smile and engaging personality, Ogilvie continues the supportive learning environment that was a trademark of the Sis years.

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KEYWORDS:

St. George's School of Veterinary Medicine  
Caribbean  
Ray Sis  
Timothy Ogilvie  
Charles Modica  
One Health  
Brittany King

TOPICS:

Caribbean Veterinary Colleges and Schools

LEADING QUESTION:

What is the second largest Caribbean School of Veterinary Medicine?

META-SUMMARY:

St George's School of Veterinary Medicine has a robust program dedicated to One Health.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

*Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.