DVM Student Profile

Committed veterinarian, enthusiastic sleuth: Lopez is all about public health

They are silent ... even more so than a mouse. They don’t smell, and to see most of them takes special equipment. One of the best ways to track foodborne pathogens is to chat with people who are sick: maybe, says Karen Lopez, you’ll discover they bought a pound of ground beef from the same supermarket. Lopez, who will graduate with her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Cornell University in 2011, thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to become a detective while working toward her Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University of Minnesota, which she will earn in May.

“Tracing foodborne outbreaks back to the very first illness—possibly to the very first jar of peanut butter—is fun,” said Lopez, who noted several foods that are known culprits, including raw oysters, red raspberries, raw milk, uncooked meats, and sprouts. “This is definitely part of public health. But so is making sure to speak with pet owners about MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) and deworming. The link between veterinarians and public health is strong.” Lopez will be the first graduate of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine to also graduate from the University of Minnesota’s public health program, taking advantage of a partnership between the two institutions. As one of...
three veterinary colleges to have a formal agreement with Minnesota’s School of Public Health, Cornell students have access to a faculty advisor, online courses at Minnesota, and a pre-determined list of Cornell classes that are accepted as transfer credits for the MPH. The agreement, which enables students to work toward both degrees simultaneously, was one of the features that attracted Lopez to Cornell.

“I’ve always known I wanted to be a veterinarian,” said Lopez. “I became interested in public health while an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins where I took a course that highlighted the clear connection between veterinary medicine and public health. It’s unmistakable.”

Although students can apply to Minnesota’s public health program anytime during their four years as a veterinary student (and take up to seven years to complete the program), Lopez applied to both schools simultaneously, which allowed her to begin completing Minnesota course work the summer before entering Cornell. She also visited Minnesota two other summers to participate in the 3-week Public Health Institute, where, she says, she was able to immerse herself in both the technical content and diversity of the field. “At the Institutes, I collaborated with people from all medical fields, levels of training, backgrounds, and experiences,” said Lopez. “This diversity of people, knowledge, and outlooks on life gave me the tools I need to develop my own perspectives, perspectives that are based on true insights into how a particular issue affected people who bring many different positions to the table. It is really eye-opening.”

Lopez will earn her MPH this spring, after having completed 42 credits, a field experience, and a master’s project. “Veterinarians with experience in public health have a vast array of career options,” said Kevin Cummings DVM ’96, who is currently completing his PhD in epidemiology and who serves as faculty advisor for students seeking the MPH from Minnesota. “At a time of increasing concern over emerging infectious diseases, food safety, and the health of our environment, we as a profession are in demand and well-positioned to profoundly impact the health of our society.”

Dan Gurvich

Admissions on the Road

The Director of Admissions will be in Anaheim, California on Thursday, September 30th and available to meet with prospective students interested in learning more about Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine and how to prepare for a future application to the DVM degree program. If you are interested in meeting, please email vet_admissions@cornell.edu.

Cornell’s Centennial Veterinarian

July 12, 2010 marked the 100th birthday of Dr. Larry Waitz, a 1931 veterinary graduate from Cornell. Still living with his wife in the house to which they moved when he retired several decades ago, Dr. Waitz is a fountain of stories of life at Cornell over 80 years ago. His fascinating biography along with a 2007 recording of his personal life’s story can be found at www.vet.cornell.edu/legacy/.

Donald Smith, DVM
Fall 2010 Application Process

The Cornell Supplemental Application and the VMCAS Application are both up and running! To begin your Cornell Supplemental Application, you will need to have your VMCAS ID number. Once you have this number you can begin working on both applications at the same time. The following are the links to the applications and their respective deadlines:

- **Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS) Application**
  Deadline: October 1, 2010 (12:00pm EST)

- **Cornell Supplemental Application**
  Deadline: October 25, 2010

**Tips for Applicants**

**Tip #1:** Start your Cornell Supplemental Application as soon as you can. On a regular basis we send out email tips (like these) and reminders to assist you in the application process.

**Tip #2:** Please make sure you have official transcripts sent directly from your college registrar to the DVM Admissions Office as soon as possible. We will begin tracking in documents and prerequisite courses September 1st

**Tip #3:** The recommended deadline for a Prerequisite Course Substitution Form is September 15th. We will continue to review these forms after the recommended deadline, but the response time may be delayed.

**Tip #4:** Watch your tracking page for documents and prerequisite course work to be tracked in starting September 1st. Note, this is a manual process, so allow time between having documents sent in and seeing it up on the tracking page.

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Attention all Pre-Vet Clubs!

**Annual Pre-Vet Club Saturday**
Saturday, October 16, 2010
12:00-3:00

The schedule includes an Admissions Presentation (from preparation to applying, plus information on careers in veterinary medicine and research opportunities); a tour of the College of Veterinary Medicine (including the academic facilities, labs, library and Cornell University Hospital for Animals) led by DVM students; and pizza & conversation with other Pre-Vet Clubs.

If your Pre-Vet Club would like to attend, please contact Jennifer Mailey, Director of Admissions at jam333@cornell.edu. Last year we had 7-8 clubs attend and it was a wonderful day!
Admissions Presentations & Tours

Fall 2010
On-Campus Admissions Presentations & Tours

- Friday, September 24th from 3:00-5:00
- Friday, October 15th from 3:00-5:00
- Friday, November 12th from 3:00-5:00

Register for the Admissions Presentations & Tours on our website:
https://secure.vet.cornell.edu/admissions/application/regform.asp