



## Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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# Honored with Zoetis Distinguished Veterinary Teacher Award, Dr. Brian Collins gives hooding speech

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Dr. Brian Collins, director of the Community Practice Service at Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, has been honored with The Zoetis Distinguished Veterinary Teacher Award for 2014. This award is given to a faculty member who has demonstrated leadership, character, and teaching ability through high-caliber instruction and responsiveness to the needs of students. Nominations are made by students and submitted to the Honors and Awards Committee.



The award was given during the College's annual Senior Gala event at the Statler Hotel on May 19. Dr. Katherine Edmondson, assistant dean for learning and instruction, and Dr. Michael Kotlikoff, Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine, presented it in conjunction with senior student Alyssa Chandler '14.

"Dr. Collins embodies the qualities outlined by this award," said Chandler. "His dedication to both teaching and community outreach has made an unforgettable impression upon those of us fortunate to work with him. In his role as instructor and mentor he encourages his students to hone their clinical skills by allowing us to assume primary case responsibility. He constantly makes himself available to support us through the challenges of primary work up, patient care, and client interaction. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he donates his time to many area shelters and rescues, providing exceptional veterinary care to animals in need and providing students with the opportunity to build their surgical skills under his direct supervision. He inspires us by his example to approach others with kindness and patience and above all to become the best doctors we can be."

Collins manages the Cornell University Hospital for Animals' Community Practice Service and developed a surgery service within it that focuses on routine procedures. He supervises students doing surgeries with local and regional shelters and Ithaca's Shelter Outreach Services, and is President of the board for Ithaca's Shelter Outreach Services, a non-profit organization that provides low-cost spay and neuter services to animal shelters and organizations.

As the award recipient, Collins was invited to give the speech for the College's hooding ceremony for the Class of 2014 as well as their family members, friends, loved ones, faculty, emeriti, and distinguished guests.

"It is an extraordinary honor to be addressing all of you, and I am humbled by the recognition you have given me," said Collins, who described his experience twenty years prior, when he was attending his own hooding ceremony. "I

truly loved my time at Cornell. So many good things happened. And I realized that I had actually learned a new language—the language of veterinary medicine.”

Recalling the progression from incoming first-year student to outgoing veterinarian, Collins recounted many pivotal moments in the students’ veterinary training leading up to their graduation.

“Upon graduation your roles will change,” said Collins. “You are all officially about to join one of the world’s most noble professions! Suddenly you are no longer a student in the same sense of the word, but you are a doctor with responsibilities to clients, patients, staff, and your fellow veterinarians. However, your days of being a student will continue throughout your career.”

Collins recalled his journey to becoming a teacher of veterinary medicine and the ways in which teaching has helped him learn in turn.

“You taught me to listen and to keep asking questions, said Collins. “You brought fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the clinics each day. You taught me to remember why our profession is so diverse and so great. Together we learned that it’s ok that we don’t know the answer to every question. We learned how to approach problems and find the information we needed.”

Congratulating the students for their accomplishments, Collins discussed the crucial role the concept of service plays in veterinary professions.

“You are bound to accomplish even greater things as you apply your education to the service of others,” said Collins. “Service can happen in your daily lives in your communities or in underserved areas in other parts of the world. You will provide service to your companion animal clients as you answer questions about routine care, end of life decisions, and everything in between. You will provide service to farmers as they strive to succeed and provide the food and fiber that we all depend on. You will provide service to your colleagues, as you enter a world of collaborative medicine and research, for the good of our patients and humanity. And most of all, you will provide service to your patients, as they remind you each day to strive for excellence.”