

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Dolphins to dairy cows: College summer programs offer diversity of experiences

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Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine is well known for its world-class DVM program. But the learning doesn't stop when the school year ends; during the summer months, the College hosts educational programs that give students engaging and instructive experiences--from dolphin training, to dairy management, to workshops hosted by Nobel Laureates. "Our summer programs offer fantastic opportunities for students to engage in research and pursue career interests in greater depth," says Dr. Kathy Edmondson, assistant dean for learning and instruction at the College.

Diving Deep: AQUAVET®

AQUAVET® trains both DVM students and established veterinarians in aquatic animal medicine. From fish anatomy, to water quality, to dolphin husbandry, trainees receive intensive hands-on learning in all areas of marine and aquatic



animal health. Having celebrated its 40th anniversary this year, AQUAVET® is the oldest and best-known program of its kind.

“One of the biggest benefits students get out of this experience is the breadth of experts they get to meet,” says Dr. Rod Getchell, research scientist in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and associate director of the program. “They get exposed to the best talent this field has to offer, and, if you’re lucky, these teachers will someday be your colleagues, too.” AQUAVET alums include the senior staff veterinarian at Chicago’s Shedd aquarium, vice president for research and science at

SeaWorld, and clinical assistant professor in the zoological pathology program at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



“This program provides a unique opportunity to understand and explore a part of veterinary medicine that’s not usually covered in traditional vet school curriculum,” notes Sarah Friday ’19.

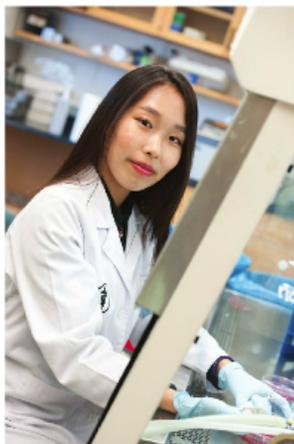
“AQUAVET I was one of the most rewarding and life-changing experiences I have been involved with throughout veterinary school, and frankly, most of my educational career,” says College student Erica Feldman ‘18 who, thanks to the program, became interested in ornamental fish aquaculture and as a result will do a tropical aquaculture fish lab externship in Florida in 2018. “The people I have met, the knowledge I have gained and the paths I can see myself traveling in the future will stem from this summer, and I know AQUAVET will be a major influence on the rest of my career,” she says.



International Influence: Leadership Program for Veterinary Scholars

The program sponsoring the creativity workshop with Nobel Laureates is a prestigious one. For the past 27 years, top-notch veterinary students from across the globe gather to live and learn together, participating in leadership workshops and engaging in faculty-led research projects. Participants have traveled from Ireland, Australia, South Korea, and beyond to immerse themselves in science, career development, and leadership training.

“Our goal is to provide students with learning experiences that clarify and reinforce their commitment to careers in science,” says Program Director Dr. John Parker, associate professor of virology. “Many of our alums become scientific leaders within the veterinary profession.” Indeed, program graduates have gone on to become director of



pathology at Novartis, director of the DVM/MPH program at the University of Minnesota, and head of Institute of Virology at the School of Veterinary Medicine in Leipzig, Germany.

“I would highly recommend this program to my peers,” says Liz Goldsmith, a current Leadership Program trainee and third-year veterinary student at Colorado State University. “Participants are bound to have a valuable training experience during an incredibly fun

and potentially life-changing summer.”



Cream of the Crop: Summer Dairy Institute

Cornell also hosts the number one training program for prospective dairy veterinarians—the Summer Dairy Institute. Founded 13 years ago by College faculty members Dr. Daryl Nydam, Dr. Charles Guard, and Dr. Robert Gilbert, the program has grown into the best of its kind, with the goal of “bridging the gap between what is taught in traditional veterinary curriculum, and what new graduates need to accelerate their career in providing value to sophisticated dairy farmers,” says Nydam, who acts as program director.

This means trainees get in-depth training in skills that are crucial for the modern dairy industry—rigorous data-based decision-making, records analysis, and sophisticated technology-driven reproduction protocols, to name a few. “Our students want to bring these valuable services to high-level dairy producers, in addition to the traditional medical services,” Nydam says.



While it’s an intensive program, it’s also a lot of fun. “These students live together, eat together, study together,” says Nydam. “We’ve even had a few marriages come out of this program.”

Meaningful Mentorship: Veterinary Investigators Program (VIP)

This ten-week program is designed to give veterinary students (most of them from Cornell) an introduction to biomedical research. Applicants identify three faculty with whom they are interested in working, along with the applicant's top three areas of interest.



“The program is structured for people with no research experience, but who may have an inkling that it’s something they may want to do,” says Arla Hourigan, graduate education manager.

“This program gives students an excellent introduction to the world of biomedical research,” adds Dr. Bettina Wagner, associate dean for research & graduate education and director of VIP. For many participants it ignites a life-long passion for scientific inquiry.”

The program is also a natural fit for combined degree students at Cornell—those who are pursuing both a DVM and a PhD degree simultaneously. Erica Lachenauer is a current combined-degree student, and has participated in VIP twice. “My absolute favorite part about the VIP program is the NIH-Merial conference at the end of the summer,” she says. “This conference has prestigious faculty from around the country and world, who give seminars on the amazing research they are completing.”

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