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## April 2010

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## CURRENT ISSUE

# A message from the President

Dear Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine Alumni,

You and I are part of an extraordinary group of individuals – graduates of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. The Veterinary Alumni Association, to which we all belong, helps us connect with one another, current students and the College.

On behalf of the Executive Board of the Alumni Association I would like to share with you some of our recent discussions. We will be revisiting our mission as we look to create greater avenues for alumni engagement both with our veterinary students as well as with alumni across the country:

-- We are developing communication and networking opportunities for veterinary students and alumni to assist students as they explore career opportunities and seek professional guidance.

-- We are expanding the size and breadth of our Executive Board to mirror our diverse alumni population, whether it be industry specific, geographic or demographic.

-- Finally, we wish to strengthen our Veterinary Alumni Association through greater engagement of more alumni in meaningful activities that serve alumni, the College and the profession.

I am also pleased to share with you another recent decision of the Executive Board. As you know, our Alumni Association has solicited dues on an annual basis and received generous lifetime contributions from 400 alumni, which are invested in and managed by the Cornell University Foundation for the ultimate benefit of the College of Veterinary Medicine. As part of our review process, the Executive Board has voted to follow the lead of other college alumni associations at Cornell and at a great many American colleges and universities and dispense with the collection of annual dues.

We will focus our efforts on developing programs that are relevant to the professional development needs of alumni, encouraging interactions among alumni, students and faculty and fundraising for programs identified as priorities at the College.

We have the full endorsement of Dean Kotlikoff and I have, in fact, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Dean which goes into effect this coming fiscal year outlining that a set amount from the College's Annual Fund will be earmarked specifically to underwrite our strategic programs.

I hope this exciting news encourages you to become more involved with the College through our Association. If you are interested in becoming more involved with our Association, please contact Lyn LaBar in the College's Office of Alumni Affairs and Development at 607.253.4230 or [cel75@cornell.edu](mailto:cel75@cornell.edu).

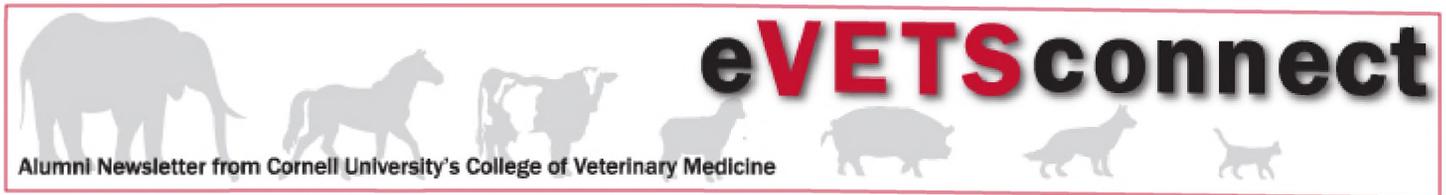
In addition, please feel free to contact me or any member of our Executive Board. A listing of current members can be found at [www.vet.cornell.edu/alumni/aassociation.htm](http://www.vet.cornell.edu/alumni/aassociation.htm). We welcome your help, questions and feedback.

Very truly yours,

Jonathan E. May, DVM '80  
President, Veterinary Alumni Association

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# Cornell forges relationship to bring profession to Asia



Cornell University and The City University of Hong Kong have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish terms of collaboration for the creation of the first veterinary medicine academic program in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR). Under the prospective collaboration agreement, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine would provide in-depth and ongoing advice and guidance to City University in the planning, establishment, operation, and evaluation of the new School of Veterinary Medicine, with the goal of securing international accreditation in the future. The School will offer a Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine degree, granted by the City University of Hong Kong. Cornell University and City University expect this School to serve as an international center of excellence in veterinary medicine in Asia. The international collaboration is motivated by a growing awareness of the need to develop strong programs in veterinary public health as a response to the increasing global threats of zoonotic diseases and of outbreaks of food and water-borne diseases.

The School of Veterinary Medicine will be housed at new and renovated academic and small animal clinical facilities on the City University of Hong Kong campus as well as leveraging other supporting farm and large animal clinical facilities within the Hong Kong SAR. Plans are underway to develop a food animal and regulatory medicine clinic in mainland China, which would serve as a satellite teaching facility. When appropriate and possible, City University's BVM students may also participate in specialty training at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine in Ithaca, N.Y.

"Cornell University has a long history of innovation in veterinary medicine," said Michael I. Kotlikoff, Cornell's Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine, noting that Cornell granted the first Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in the United States in 1876 to Daniel E. Salmon, who became the first U.S. "Chief Veterinary Officer" at the US Department of Agriculture and for who identified Salmonella, which bears his name. "We are proud to have the opportunity to assist an international partner in the development of a model program that will meet ever-increasing societal needs to protect animal health, relieve animal suffering, conserve livestock resources, promote public health and advance modern medical knowledge. This partnership has great potential to improve the quality of life for animals and people and shape the future direction of veterinary medicine."

The proposed project, already endorsed by City University's Management Board and Faculty Senate, will provide veterinary education at the highest international standard. All courses will be in English and will include the full breadth and depth of veterinary education adopted at the world's leading institutions of veterinary education.

"The proposed School will position City University as the regional centre for the training of top level graduates to meet local and regional demand, as well as a centre for excellence for academic research, professional advancement, and the sustained elevation of practice standards to promote public health, animal care, food safety and food production industry in the region," said City University's President, Professor Way Kuo. The proposed School will further enhance City University's capacity to contribute to human welfare and knowledge creation through its premier professional education.

The plan is to receive the first class of 30 students at School of Veterinary Medicine in 2012, increasing the student class size to 50 by the time the first graduation takes place.

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## Faculty member earns Pioneer Award

Dr. Lisa Fortier is committed to discovering the most effective regenerative therapies for tendon and cartilage damage. Although her primary concern is to improve the quality of life for horses, her work is relevant to human medicine, as the horse is recognized as a marvelous model for diseases that afflict people, too.



With generous support from the Zweig Foundation, Fortier and her team conduct biologically-based research designed to improve the cellular response to injury of tendon and cartilage. Enhancing the healing response on a cellular and molecular level, Fortier says, may ultimately improve the quality of repair, improve the prognosis for return to performance, and decrease the incidence of re-injury. Their research is based on a trilogy: stem cells, growth factors, and a suitable scaffold. In addition the goal with any new therapy developed is to complete the procedure using a simple joint scope with just one visit to the operating room for which some new and improved equipment is necessary.

The long-term goal is to develop a regenerative methodology that can be utilized by all equine surgeons, not just those in an academic setting.

In her research, Fortier uses self-derived adult stem cells. They are abundant, pose no risk of rejection from the patient's immune system, and her lab group has developed and verified a marker that can be used to enrich the stem cells from a bone marrow sample. We now need to take advantage of this information and develop a method to isolate stem cells from a bone marrow sample right in the operating room. To complete the trilogy, platelet rich plasma provides the growth factors (stored in platelets) and the scaffold (a framework to which stem cells cling, thus holding them in the desired location).

“Generation of the optimal platelet rich plasma is one of the issues driving our equipment needs,” said Fortier. “There are more machines than cereals in the grocery store to do this, but they all produce a different ratio of platelets and white blood cells. We need platelets to enhance repair, but a minimal number of white blood cells because our work indicates that the presence of white blood cells can be directly correlated to the loss of normal tissue. One of the major projects in the laboratory is to determine what the optimal ratio of platelets to white blood cells is and then to use this information to drive the industry towards generation of a machine to match our needs.”

“To make regenerative medicine based surgery a realistic option for our clients, we need to make it a one-day, one trip to the operating room procedure,” said Fortier. We need to be able to collect bone marrow directly before surgery, extract the stem cells and generate the platelet rich plasma while the horse is being prepared for surgery, so that when the horse is ready, we will have the necessary stem cells and platelet rich plasma to complete the repair procedures.

Fortier earned her DVM at Colorado State and completed a PhD and large animal surgery residency at Cornell. She is the president of the International Cartilage Repair Society, and she and her husband, Dr. Alan Nixon, Professor of Large Animal Surgery at the College, have three children.

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## Say it with sweatshirts ... or t-shirts or hats



SCAVMA has a new [web site](#) where you can purchase apparel and gifts imprinted with Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, it is easier than ever before to show your pride. Proceeds benefit the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association at Cornell University. These funds are used to support continuing education opportunities and to support philanthropic opportunities in the community. For instance, last year, SCAVMA supported the first annual Pedal for Pets bike-a-thon. To order your apparel and gear, visit their [online store](#) today.



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## Students stay busy this spring

The **44th Annual Open House** attracted several thousand animal lovers. During the day-long event, people from Ithaca and the surrounding areas – and some from a bit farther away, like Long Island – talked with current veterinary students and faculty about the health and welfare of animals. Students presented a variety of topics, including what happens during routine physical examinations for companion animals; how veterinary hospitals test for respiratory function in performance horses, and a petting zoo with piglets, chicks, and cows. They also talked children through “surgery” on stuffed bears, monkeys, turtles, and a variety of other “best friends” at the annual Dress Like a Surgeon and Teddy Bear ER



interactive components. The College’s farrier, Michael Wildenstein, demonstrated his centuries-old craft; Dr. Andrea Looney showcased the benefits of the underwater treadmill for dogs; and others offered lectures on emergency and critical care for animals, pet toxicology, public health issues, pet behavior and the Iditarod. Representatives from community groups, including the k-9 police unit and canine agility programs, were also standing-room only attractions at the event.

This year’s event was organized by Priyangani DeSoyza and Kristi Hulme, both members of the Class of 2012, who recruited fellow students and faculty to develop and staff the exhibits, demonstrations, and lectures.

“This is our signature event for the community,” said Anna Hutchinson, a member of the Class of 2012. “It is a chance for the College to share the tremendous breadth of opportunities that comprise the profession. It gives students a chance to put our learning to excellent use and to strengthen our communication skills. We’re looking forward to planning next year’s event and hope to see many familiar faces. There’s something new every year.”

More [Open House pictures](#).



The second annual **Pedal for Pets** was also a success, thanks to lots of hard work and leadership by a group of students. Members of SCAVMA organized three adult rides that took cyclists through several counties and towns and up various hills as well as two youth rides through the Plantations. More than 70 riders participated in the event, which was a fundraiser for the Patient Assistance Fund at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals. The fund serves as a resource for patients whose families do not have the resources to pay for the medical treatment they need. Donations to the event will be accepted through May 1. To support the Patient Assistance Fund, please visit the online [giving](#) site. Under Designation select Cornell University Hospital for Animals. Under Other Designation, type Patient Assistance Fund.

More [Pedal for Pets pictures](#).

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**Scholarships make the difference**

Brothers Frank DVM '63 and Josef DVM '67 Powell make it a priority to support DVM students each year at the College of Veterinary Medicine. In 1977, they established a scholarship in their parents' names as special thanks for the help they received from them through veterinary school. Now, Frank and Joe can help countless others. The Ryman and Katharine Powell Scholarship assists students from Western New York who rely on the funds to help them achieve their education. This year, students Jennifer Biasillo '12, Andrea Blitz '11 and Jayne Kubat '12 all benefitted from the family scholarship.

Jennifer, a former licensed veterinary technician and a Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner, has interests in private practice upon graduation. She is president of the pain management club at Cornell and is also involved with the Surgery Club, Holistic Club and the American Animal Hospital Association student chapter. Both Andrea and Jayne look forward to life-long learning and growing into the profession.

Scholarship and fellowship support is a priority at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine. These resources are used to attract and prepare the next generation of doctors, researchers, policy-makers and educators. As the College seeks to increase the size of incoming classes, in partnership with the State of New York, to help meet the increasing demand for veterinarians, access to these funds will be in increasing demand. As such, the College is also committed to increasing the number of endowments for post-DVM Cornell Clinical Fellowships, which prepare veterinary scientists and teachers; for DVM and DVM/PhD scholarships; and for clinical residencies and graduate fellowships.

For more information on how you can support students, please contact [Amy Robinson](#) or call 607-253-3742.

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