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Cornell University announces country's first veterinary clinical fellows program

Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine's new two-year Clinical Fellows Program is the first in the country to address a growing shortage of academic veterinarians who conduct research on animal diseases and basic biology.

"By providing a new model for academic veterinary training, we hope to address the critical shortage of clinicians and scholars who are needed to train the next generation of veterinarians and to continue to make advances in the treatment of disease," said Michael I. Kotlikoff, Cornell's Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine.

The program is designed to help students meet the financial and time demands of qualifying for a position in veterinary academic medicine, which has traditionally required students to complete an M.S. or Ph.D. after they finish their doctorate of veterinary medicine (DVM). Newly minted DVMs graduate with loans of \$80,000 on average.

"For students to postpone paying off their debt for another four or five years [to pursue another degree] is a hardship," said Robert Gilmour, professor of physiology at Cornell's veterinary college.

The two-year program, available to veterinarians who have completed a three-year residency, offers an annual salary of \$60,000 plus benefits and an additional \$15,000 per year to fund a research project.

Applicants must identify a suitable mentor at Cornell and submit a research project description. Three students have been accepted to start the program Aug. 1, with hopes of expanding enrollment to five students in future years.

The students, Sophy Jesty and Alexa Burton, are both current residents at Cornell's Hospital for Animals, while the third student, Kelly Hume, is completing her residency at the North Carolina State Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Once students are accepted, the college is committed to spending \$220,000 per student for the two-year program. The current class of students will be funded in part by the Harry M. Zweig Memorial Fund for Equine Research, endowment money from the Feline Health Center and college resources.

College administrators hope to build a critical mass of veterinary researchers and academic clinicians through Cornell's nascent program and to inspire other universities to follow suit with their own programs. The hope, Gilmour said, is to eventually develop a national meeting where new generations of veterinary scholars can network and collaborate.

by Krishna Ramanujan of the Cornell Chronicle

A recent issue of [DVM Magazine](#) highlights the College's new Clinical Fellows Program, an innovative initiative to attract DVMs to research positions.



Burton



Jesty



Hume

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