

## Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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# Coffee & Conversation event brings current students and alumni together

🐾 Friday, November 9, 2018 - 3:06pm



Coffee & Conversation, an annual event at the Fall New York State Veterinary Conference that brings alumni and current students together. Photos by Rachel Philipson.

College alumni bonded with current veterinary students during this year's fall New York State Veterinary Conference in the "Coffee and Conversation" portion of the weekend. An annual tradition since 2013, this event is an opportunity to bring alumni and students together for informal conversations and networking.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to share with these very engaged students the lessons I've learned in my career," said Mark Olcott, D.V.M. '95. "The conversations are wide ranging and I always leave them with both a feeling of pride in being a Cornell alum, and also confidence in the future of our profession."

"I think the networking event is important because it gives students the opportunity to meet and talk to successful vets who have gone through everything we are going through," said third-year student Rachel Somma. "All the alumni

are always very excited to see us and talk to us, which is great.”

The 2013 event began with a handful of alumni and students, and has grown significantly over time. This year, despite the early start time of 7:30 a.m., approximately 45 current students and 16 alumni met in the lobby of the Animal Health Diagnostic Center to share their stories and learn from one another.

“As a veterinarian who is a bit long in the tooth, this event gives me an opportunity to learn from the student participants,” said Malcolm Kram, D.V.M. ’74. “It is also a great opportunity to share my experiences within the profession and open their minds to the tremendous opportunities that exist for them in addition to clinical practice. I’m constantly amazed of their desire to explore global opportunities, especially in the arenas of public health, the environment and nutrition.”

“I attended the alumni-student networking event the past two years and both times it was a very worthwhile experience,” added third-year student Chelsea Colangelo. “It’s a great way to get to know people personally and expand your professional network.”

The alumni who participated included Susan Ackermann, D.V.M. ’86; Jackie Bentley, D.V.M. ’95; Donald Bruno, D.V.M. ’87; Jorge Colon ’92, D.V.M. ’95; Mara DiGrazia ’92, D.V.M. ’96; Patricia Erickson ’92, D.V.M. ’97; John Fieger, D.V.M. ’16; Scott Kaplan, D.V.M. ’86; Malcolm Kram, D.V.M. ’74; Edward Mackillop ’00, D.V.M. ’04; Pasquale Meleleo, D.V.M. ’08; Mark Olcott, D.V.M. ’95; Maritza Perez-Bruno, D.V.M. ’87; Carole Richards, D.V.M. ’07; Grant Richards, D.V.M. ’07; and Lauren Eleanor Witter, M.S. ’15, D.V.M. ’17.

“I enjoy participating in the alumni-student networking event because it helps me reconnect with the college in a more personal way,” said alumna Mara DiGrazia ’92, D.V.M. ’96. “Before it begins, even with over 20 years of experience, I wonder what I could possibly offer them. Within seconds, I always find myself surrounded by eager, inquisitive students interested in things that I had lost interest in. In a flash, the event is over and I leave feeling rejuvenated by the spirit and drive of the Cornell vet student. I greatly appreciate this opportunity and I can see the students love it too!”

“This networking event is a great way to make connections with our wonderful alumni,” added second-year student Liliana Alaniz. “I loved that both students and D.V.M.s were engaging in conversation about future opportunities and current trends in our profession. I look forward to attending next year!”

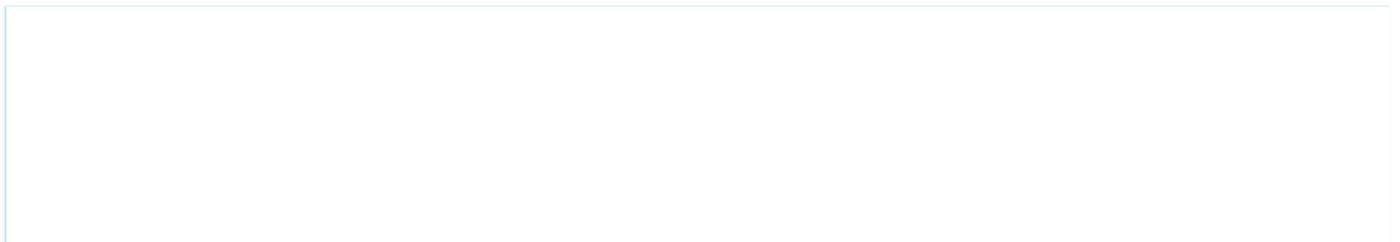
Said Kram, “I take time out of the annual meeting’s presentations to attend this unique event as it is a way for me to give back to my profession and the college as well as learn of the challenges and interests of today’s students who will become our future leaders.”

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- Mark Olcott, D.V.M. ’95

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