



## College News

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### **Cornellian's leadership skills help a bobcat and the environment**

America's animal health system is the envy of the world. We care for companion animals like we care for children. Sanctuaries rescue farm animals. And when wildlife—like a bobcat that was likely beaten and left for dead in the desert heat—are suffering, people like Dr. Greg Costanzo '09 scrub in on their day off.

At the time, Costanzo was working at the Southern Arizona Veterinary and Specialty Emergency Center and volunteers at the Tuscon Wildlife Center, a volunteer, donation-based organization committed to serving the medical needs of Arizona's native wildlife.

"I know some people question why we should put time and money and effort into wildlife like bobcats," said Costanzo. "Besides the fact that we're on their land, if we take a very practical approach to the question, every creature has a place in our ecosystem. If we remove one – or allow a particular species to be decimated because humans find it to be a nuisance – we are risking a loss of balance that will permeate through the entire ecological chain, including flora and the watershed."

Not easily swayed by opposing viewpoints, Costanzo used his leadership skills during the bobcat incident. Three doctors were scrubbed in. Two of them were ready to euthanize. Costanzo took the lead, convincing the others to join him in a multi-hour surgery that involved rebuilding the animal's shattered mandible with lessons Costanzo said he learned during Block V from Drs. Krotscheck, Trotter, and Todhunter.

"Fortunately, he only had soft tissue wounds to his legs," Costanzo recalls. "Our efforts paid off. It took two days for him to want to eat and two months of care before he could be safely released to an area that research had shown a bobcat's presence would benefit."

His penchant for leading, Costanzo said, can be traced to Cornell.

"Cornell helped me become a leader. I was the president of SCAVMA, very involved with other student organizations, and I participated in the veterinary leadership conference, which helped to fine-tune my leadership skills. Beyond activities, though, Cornell's professors influenced the direction I took my career and the way I think about life."

Costanzo came to Cornell expecting that he would ultimately work in a companion animal clinic. After meeting Drs. James Morrissey, George Kollias, and Noha Abou-Madi, his interest in wildlife medicine blossomed. And, even today, when he's contemplating the best approach to relieve pain and suffering, Costanzo considers what Dr. Andrea Looney would do if faced with a similar situation.



“Cornell helped me live my dream,” said Costanzo, who recently began a residency in exotic animal medicine and surgery at Stahl’s Exotic Animal Veterinary Services with Dr. Scott Stahl in Fairfax, Virginia, currently. To learn how he’s fulfilling that dream, Costanzo invites everyone to read his blog.