



ALUMNI E-NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

May/June 2021



Inspired by Animals and the Arts

John Hallett DVM'90 has always loved art as much as animals and science. Throughout his career, he's pursued sculpting alongside veterinary medicine. His latest creative endeavor is an homage to his alma mater – a bronze sculpture for the School of Veterinary Medicine's building expansion project. Hallett is donating his time and talents for the project and incorporating input from alumni, faculty, staff and students in the multi-step, multi-year process.

[Read More](#)

The latest updates on research, faculty and staff, and other happenings at the school.

Transitions: On June 1, **Chris Snyder**, a clinical professor of dentistry and oral surgery, became the school's new associate dean for clinical affairs and teaching hospital director, replacing **Ruthanne Chun DVM'91** following more than a decade of tremendous leadership in the role.

Growing demand: The Wisconsin Companion Animal Resources, Education, and Social Services (WisCARES) clinic, which provides veterinary medical care and social services to individuals in Dane County who are low-income or experiencing homelessness, has [experienced an influx of new clientele](#) due to financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Celebrations: If you'd like to watch, you can view recordings of the school's virtual [Celebration of Excellence](#) and [Investiture Ceremony](#), as well as the UW-Madison [Commencement for graduate and professional students](#). The Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association also hosted a [Blue Coat Ceremony](#) for the Class of 2022.

Building expansion: CD Smith has been selected as the general contractor for the School of Veterinary Medicine building expansion and renovation. The school will host a groundbreaking ceremony on June 18, from 1-2 p.m., with an in-person event for invited guests and [online streaming](#).

Recent research advancements:

- In April, Sen. Tammy Baldwin [visited the AIDS Vaccine Research Laboratory](#) to learn more about research led by School of Veterinary Medicine Professor **Thomas Friedrich** and School of Medicine and Public Health colleague David O'Connor. Since spring 2020 they have studied the virus that causes COVID-19, including transmission and genomic sequencing of variants of concern.
- Professor **Michael Cahill** led [research published in Neuron](#) that found for the first time that disruptions to a particular protein called Akt can lead to the brain changes characteristic of bipolar disorder. The results offer a foundation for research into treating the often-overlooked cognitive impairments of bipolar disorder and add to a growing understanding of how the biochemistry of the brain affects health and disease.
- Graduate student **Allison Ludwig** is co-first author of [work published in the journal Science Advances](#) that may provide hope for those who have vision loss. The researchers made new photoreceptors from human pluripotent stem cells and developed a micro-molded photoreceptor "patch" designed to be implanted under a damaged or diseased retina.

Alumni Updates

The latest news about your classmates and items of special interest to alumni.

Marie Bucko DVM'21 [recently joined VETgirl](#) as head of the VETgirl Student Ambassador Program.

Becky Krull DVM'05 and **Meg Mueller DVM'10** [spoke with Wisconsin State Farmer](#) about some of the stressors and pressures facing veterinarians and ideas for solutions.

Keith Poulsen DVM'04, PhD'12, director of the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, continues to share with media expertise related to COVID-19 testing, response and transmission, including recent interviews with [Spectrum News](#) and [U.S. News & World Report](#).

Kara Wallisch DVM'15, who lives in Madison with her husband, two sons and a Labrador retriever, [joined Sondel Family Veterinary Clinic](#) in April.



YOUR PERSPECTIVE

“Every day Maxine and Lois get a bale of hay in the a.m. and another bale at night. Plus, a scoop of grain when I get home from work. Maxine bellows if I forget. Oh, and bananas too. I buy the brown ones at the store just for them.”

*-Eric Howlett DVM'18, who in 2019 adopted former UW School of Veterinary Medicine resident donor and teaching cows **Maxine** and **Lois**. They now [enjoy retirement on his hobby farm](#) outside of Madison.*

Upcoming Events

Alumni Reunion Update

As campus, city and county COVID-19 policies continue to evolve, the school is now beginning to plan summer and fall events. We expect, tentatively, that our alumni reunion will be held on Saturday, **September 11**, in addition to our annual tailgate event on that same day. We will follow up with more information once these plans have been confirmed. We're thrilled to be able to see you in person again soon!

June 6

Virtual Alumni Reception: VMX Convention

7 p.m. CT

Reception will be hosted on Zoom; please email [Kristi Thorson](#) to receive the event link.

June 18

SVM Groundbreaking Ceremony

1-2 p.m.

Will include both an in-person event for invited guests and [online streaming](#). Video link will be provided prior to event.

Ongoing Clinical Trials

Dogs With Chronic Gastrointestinal Signs

UW Veterinary Care's Small Animal Internal Medicine Service is recruiting canine patients with chronic gastrointestinal signs (vomiting, diarrhea, poor appetite or weight loss) for a study investigating whether or not dogs need to be fasted for a commonly recommended test in dogs with these symptoms.

Adult medium-to-large breed dogs experiencing the above-



noted symptoms may qualify for this study. Participants receive a free blood test with results sent to their primary care veterinarian.

More
Studies



DID YOU KNOW

The School of Veterinary Medicine has finalized its first **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan**. In conjunction with the school's overall **strategic plan**, the document highlights priorities we will measure related to DEI.

