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School of  
Veterinary Medicine  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Message from the Dean | May 2020

## Celebrating Our Success During Difficult Times

This past Saturday we held the SVM's [Celebration of Excellence](#), virtually highlighting the successes of our students, faculty and staff. We're delighted that so many members of the SVM family and their loved ones watched the virtual ceremony and we hope you enjoyed the program. I want to thank Ashley Voss, Lynn Maki and Lauren Trepanier for their outstanding efforts in helping to create this tribute.



In a little more than a week, on May 9, we will also celebrate the Class of 2020's graduation and investiture ceremony. Unfortunately, this will also be held virtually, but I want each member of the Class of 2020 to know how much we value all that you have contributed to the School of Veterinary Medicine throughout your time here. We all hope that when the COVID-19 dust settles we will be able to hold an in-person event honoring your graduation, [in coordination with UW-Madison](#). I wish each of you the best in your careers, unfortunately being launched during a difficult time. We will get through this, although there will certainly be challenging times ahead.

On behalf of the Melita Grunow Family Professorship in Companion Animal Health committee, it is my pleasure to announce that our most recent recipient is Lauren Trepanier. The Grunow Professorship was established in 2015 by Melita Grunow, a great friend of the school and teaching hospital, as well as current board of visitors member. This five-year award supports a faculty member whose research is focused on improving companion animal health. Recently, the selection committee, chaired by Karen Young, had the difficult task of reviewing several worthy applicants for the award. Lauren's appointment will begin on July 1 of this year and extend through June 30, 2025. I want to thank all applicants for their interest, as well as Peter Muir, who served as our inaugural Grunow Professor from 2015-2020.

In addition, congratulations to Keith Poulsen and Michelle Turek on their promotion to clinical associate professor, and Peggy Schmidt on her appointment as clinical professor. Schmidt will join the school in July as associate dean for professional programs.

With the graduation of the Class of 2020, I want to welcome the Class of 2021 to their clinical year. As highlighted by Associate Dean Maki a little over a week ago, your

clinical year will begin virtually, but it is our great hope that by early summer we will begin to transition you into hands-on clinical experiences in UW Veterinary Care, as well as through externships. I am working with campus and all of the deans of schools of veterinary medicine around the world to create a road map for this transition. Our decisions will be dictated by state and local health officials and where the COVID-19 pandemic takes us. I can assure you that we are dedicated to your clinical training and will do everything we can to make it the best it can be. Please know that our faculty and staff will remain focused on the education you receive.

I want to thank all of our faculty and staff for all that they continue to do to educate our students, work in our hospital under very challenging circumstances, and conduct important research to benefit both animal and human health. On the hospital front, thank you to Ruthanne Chun and Meenu Verma for all that they continue to do to support the faculty and staff in our hospital and the patients and clients we serve. I know they are working hard to identify ways to safely increase clinic activity to meet client needs, to better teach our students when they return to the clinic, and to increase revenue.

However, it will take some time to return to typical hospital operations. By now, you will have seen a message I sent earlier this week highlighting the substantial deficits we are generating in our hospital. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to gradually returning the hospital to normal operations with the appropriate precautions and PPE. Until that occurs, the entire school will need to help offset those losses through either the pay cuts I proposed or being furloughed. This is not an action that any of us want to take, but it is a necessary one to prevent the school from facing an insurmountable deficit. Further communications about the workshare program or furloughs will be forthcoming in the days and weeks ahead.

I thought it would be an appropriate time after graduation to hold a virtual town hall meeting with all of you, likely the week of May 11. You will receive an invitation from me in the coming days. Several colleagues in SVM leadership positions will share brief presentations, but the majority of time will be open for your questions regarding the school, the impact of COVID-19 on our operations, and where we are headed.

Again, congratulations to the Class of 2020 and welcome, Class of 2021, to your clinical year. Be well and be safe.

## UW Veterinary Care Updates from the Director



I want to again express my gratitude to all of our hospital staff for your patience, flexibility and resilience as we together face this challenging, rapidly changing situation, adapt our hospital protocols, and gradually and thoughtfully begin to see additional cases. Thank you.

Congratulations to **Ann Stewart**, who retires today after 30 years of service as a certified veterinary technician with the SVM and hospital. Ann has taught thousands of veterinary medical students over the years and she will be missed. We wish her well.

And welcome to **Amy Nichelason**, who started April 1 as the second clinical track faculty member in our Primary Care service.

We play such an important role in the lives of our patients and clients; here is one recent client comment indicating as much:

" Other than my primary vet this is my hospital of choice. You provide unbelievable care, kindness, compassion. You are not only inclusive in your treatment but you make sure the client understands procedures/prognosis etc via discussion, phone calls, and emailed notes. This was Bonnie's and my second visit to you. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

- Mary, Waukesha, Wisconsin

## School News

Several updates surrounding COVID-19 and related School of Veterinary Medicine efforts:

- **Thomas Friedrich**, professor of pathobiological sciences and one of several COVID-19 researchers at the SVM and UW-Madison working daily to study the novel coronavirus, [presented a UW Now livestream](#) on April 28 hosted by the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association. Friedrich explained the virus's evolution process and how it is transmitted, discussed COVID-19 testing and worldwide efforts to develop a vaccine, and answered audience questions. [View a recording.](#)
- An international collaboration of virologists at the UW School of Veterinary Medicine and the vaccine companies FluGen and Bharat Biotech has begun the development and testing of a unique [vaccine against COVID-19](#) called CoroFlu. CoroFlu will build on the backbone of FluGen's flu vaccine candidate known as M2SR, based on an invention by SVM virologists and FluGen co-founders **Yoshihiro Kawaoka** and **Gabriele Neumann**.
- The Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory has loaned equipment and reagents and provided training to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene to [help conduct tests for COVID-19](#). WVDL has also stepped up to produce the viral transport media that preserves patient samples for testing -- a key bottleneck in many places.
- The Department of Psychiatry has compiled a [collection of online resources](#) to support the mental health and wellbeing of the university community, and to help navigate the additional stress and challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The website [covid19.wisc.edu](https://covid19.wisc.edu) continues to serve as the most up-to-date resource on all matters related to UW's response to COVID-19.

## Faculty and Staff News

Best wishes to **Sandi Sawchuk** on her retirement following more than 30 years of service as a clinical instructor in Primary Care. She will be missed by colleagues, students and the many loyal clients and patients that she cared for over the years. Sandi was also a great advocate for pet health through decades of media appearances.

Professor **Gillian McLellan** in the Department of Surgical Sciences has been elected to serve a three-year term, beginning in fall 2020, on the UW-Madison Biological Sciences Divisional Committee .

## Student News

Congratulations to the school's UW SAVMA chapter on [winning a SAVMie award](#) for most improved membership percentage from 2017-18 to 2018-19.

Congratulations also to **Shannon Walsh**, a doctoral student in the CBMS program, on receiving a [Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy Award](#) for communicating PhD research to the public for her thesis titled "Effects of age and mechanical loading on articular cartilage



metabolism and corresponding consequences for tissue health." After completing her thesis, Walsh will enroll in law school at Loyola University Chicago as a Health Law Fellow .

## Research News

Professor **Lauren Trepanier** will lead a Morris Animal Foundation-funded research project to [study how exposure to common environmental chemicals](#), like those found in tobacco smoke and yard products, and individual genetic differences in response to them, put dogs at risk for common cancers. Findings will help form strategies to prevent cancer in dogs, including possible avoidance and dietary modifications.



**Barry Hartup**, clinical instructor in the School of Veterinary Medicine and director of conservation medicine at the International Crane Foundation, along with Kevin Kohl at the University of Pittsburgh, are partnering on Morris Animal Foundation-funded research to determine why some [endangered whooping cranes raised in captivity](#) have specific health issues while others do not.

Professor **Troy Hornberger** recently began a newly funded RO1 grant aimed at determining whether a protein called TRIM28 plays a role in the signaling pathway through which mechanical signals regulate skeletal muscle mass.

Associate Professor **Masatoshi Suzuki** has received a five-year R01 grant to create 2D and 3D tissues using human-induced pluripotent stem cells, model muscle-tendon development and pathology in culture, and test the ability of these bioengineered tissues to repair muscle-tendon damage for regenerative therapy. Suzuki was also awarded a [Good Food Institute research grant](#) to establish a work flow for cell-based meat production by a novel cell culture method and versatile tissue engineering technologies to optimize their texture.

## Upcoming Events

In an effort to protect the health and safety of university and community members in light of the continued spread of COVID-19, in-person campus events and meetings are canceled through June 30. Alternative formats are being explored for several events. For more information, read the university's [April 10 announcement](#) on events and visit the SVM's [online calendar](#).

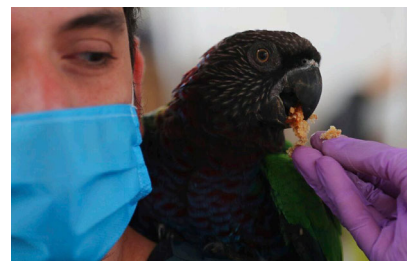
## SVM in the News

[Veterinary Colleges Go Online Only Amid COVID-19 Concerns](#)  
*JAVMA*

[With Maintaining Care In Mind, Veterinarians Adjust Practices During Coronavirus Pandemic](#)  
*Wisconsin Public Radio*

[Wisconsin Biotech Companies Could Play Key Roles in Long-Term Economic Recovery From COVID-19 Pandemic](#)  
*Wisconsin State Journal*

[Shelters Feel Pressure of Pandemic](#)  
*JAVMA*



Credit: Fernando Vergara/AP

For more media coverage of the SVM, visit the school's [In the News page](#).



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