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**School of  
Veterinary Medicine**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Message from the Dean | February 2021

## Leading Educational Excellence

As promised in my January 1 dean's message, each of the subsequent five dean's messages will focus on our [2021-2025 Strategic Plan](#)'s specific strategic priorities. In this message, I will focus on Strategic Priority 1 - Leading Educational Excellence. Peggy Schmidt, associate dean for professional programs, will lead this priority. The principal goal is to innovate the UW School of Veterinary Medicine's curriculum and lifelong learning offerings to implement an adaptable, relevant, evidence-informed and competency-based educational program to develop current and future veterinarians.



As you have heard over the past six months, Peggy has launched the PREPARE Graduates Task Force in partnership with our faculty, staff and external stakeholders, to create a framework to enhance the curriculum for our veterinary medical students. Our target is to launch our revised curriculum in fall 2023.

Additional goals in support of this priority include identifying and utilizing educational scholarship and best practices in teaching and learning and focusing on the needs of our current, past and future students/professionals. Undoubtedly you will hear from the task force and others as we evaluate, propose and eventually implement this revised curriculum. Through this and other efforts, the school remains dedicated to leading the nation in the education we provide to our students. This effort will be critical to our future success.

I also want to again acknowledge the UW School of Veterinary Medicine's VOICE chapter for being recognized for its leadership, most recently by [receiving the VOICE National Chapter of the Year Award](#) for 2020-21. This award honors a VOICE chapter for programming in support of a positive and welcoming environment and an understanding of diversity and inclusivity within the local and academic community. [Learn more](#). This is the second time our VOICE chapter has received this honor (previously in 2019). Congratulations and thank you to all VOICE members for your leadership and support of the school.

As our on-site employees have likely noticed, the new parking ramp across from the school (Lot 67) is now open, although Lot 62 will remain available until construction

begins on the school's building expansion. Bid documents are scheduled to go out late February, with the goal of beginning construction this June.

One procedural note: The university has launched a COVID-19 Spring Semester Training for employees. **All employees are expected to complete this training, available online.** This training covers guidelines and expectations in the workplace and for visitors to campus. Most people will be able to complete the training in 10 minutes or less. The training module will be available in multiple languages soon.

I want to wish each of you a good semester during what is still a very challenging time. It is certainly all of our hope that with enhanced vaccine availability across the U.S., we will return to what we would all call a more normal experience this fall.

## UW Veterinary Care Updates from the Director



Welcome to several new UW Veterinary Care employees: **Tianna Attaway**, a veterinary technician in the large animal hospital; pharmacist **Amanda Cencula**; **Karen Garcia-Olmos**, a veterinary assistant with Neurology; and **Kimberly Schmitt**, temporarily joining the purchasing team to help cover staff leave in that office.

There have been two recent section head changes in the hospital: **David Vail** is now serving as the Oncology section head. And **Starr Cameron** will now serve as section head of Neurology.

The many ways that our hospital faculty and staff continue to adapt to pandemic protocols while providing exemplary care for our patients and clients is seen and appreciated, as this recent testimonial attests. Thank you, everyone!

"My horse came back for a checkup and treatment. Due to COVID restrictions I wasn't able to go inside the facility to discuss the findings. The doctors came outside in 22-degree weather to speak to me about what they saw, next steps and to answer any and all of my questions. That they took the time to do this when they could have opted to call me instead was incredibly important to me. I will always be grateful that they made the effort to do this."

-Candace, Antioch, Illinois

**Ruthanne Chun DVM'91**  
Director, [UW Veterinary Care](#)  
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs

## School News

**COVID-19 Updates:** UW-Madison's COVID-19 response entered a new phase with the beginning of the spring semester. The university has adopted new measures to enhance the safety of the campus community. The two main components are [expanded testing protocols](#) and a new app, [Safer Badgers](#). Students, faculty and staff will use the app to manage and track test results, and to access campus facilities and services. All employees are expected to complete the [online COVID-19 Spring Semester Training](#). **Related:** Enforcement of Badger Badge restrictions for building access will be delayed to Feb. 8. The extension provides flexibility to access campus facilities provided you have not tested positive and are not isolating or quarantining. [Read this message](#) for details and more COVID-19 response updates.



**Inside the SVM Event:** On Jan. 25 the school hosted a virtual event, Inside the SVM: Helping Pets Fight Cancer. Professors **Lisa Forrest** and **David Vail** shared the latest innovations in

cancer clinical studies, treatments and technology -- and how these advancements help both pets and people. If you weren't able to join the livestream, you can [view a recording here](#).

## Teaching and Learning News

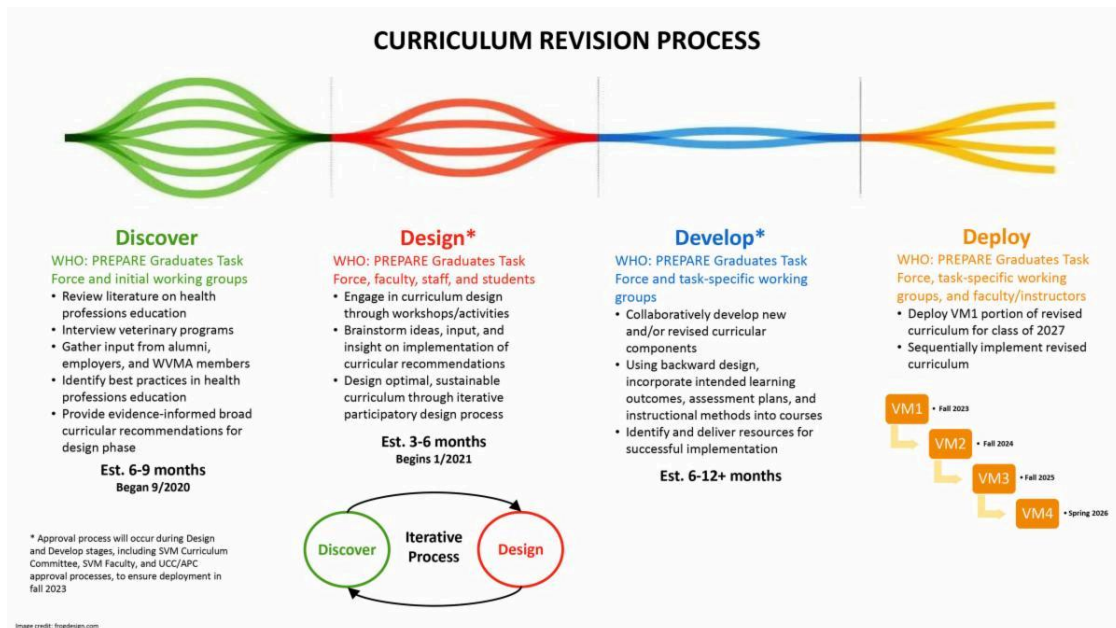
*An update from Peggy Schmidt, associate dean for professional programs*

As we begin the new year, we are also set to begin the second phase of our curriculum revision process -- the design phase. Faculty, staff and students will participate in a series of workshops to design ways to incorporate recommended evidence-base best practices.

The first set of workshops focused on incorporation of early clinical experiences into a revised curriculum. Early clinical experience has been defined as pre-clinical "experiences with authentic patient contact in a clinical context that enhances learning."

In early February, the second set of workshops will focus on horizontal and vertical integration. In other words, bringing together subjects or disciplines within the same phase of the curriculum (horizontal integration) and interweaving foundational and clinical sciences normally taught in different phases of the curriculum (vertical integration).

The below graphic helps visualize the curriculum revision process (click to [view a larger version of the image](#)).



## Faculty and Staff News

Congratulations to **Lisa Arendt** of the Department of Comparative Biosciences, unanimously approved for promotion to associate professor with tenure by the university's Biological Sciences Divisional Committee.

**Mary Thurber DVM'14**, a clinical instructor of zoological medicine, was named a [recipient of the 2020 Society of Phi Zeta Research Manuscript Award](#) for research conducted with koalas at the San Diego Zoo during her residency at the University of California, Davis.

**Dale Bjorling** will step down as associate dean of research and graduate training effective Sept. 1, following a decade of service and leadership in support of the school's research and graduate training missions. Details about the search process for this position will follow.



**Alhaji N'jai**, a former postdoctoral researcher and current honorary fellow in the Department of Pathobiological Sciences, was listed among [1,000 inspiring Black scientists in America](#) by Cell Mentor. N'jai is the founder of Project 1808, a nonprofit organization building capacity for sustainable livelihood in Sierra Leone. Mary Thurber DVM'14

Assistant Professor **Elizabeth Alvarez** coauthored with former clinical instructor **Jennifer Reinhart** an article titled Use of an Interactive Online Teaching Module Improved Students' Ability to Write a Clinically Appropriate SOAP [Subjective-Objective-Assessment-Plan] Note, [published in the Journal of Veterinary Medical Education](#).

Professors **Kristen Bernard** and **Thomas Friedrich** were part of a panel of experts to reconvene for "The Coronavirus Pandemic at One Year," hosted by the School of Medicine and Public Health on Jan. 27. [View a recording of the virtual event](#).

## Student News

Welcome to four new Ross and St. George's University students who began their clinical year with the school in January and joined the class of 2021: **Alianna Bercier**, **Megan O'Brien**, **Kelly Proctor** and **Logan Stietz**.

## Research News

Professor **David Vail** will be involved in [research efforts breaking new ground](#) to make cancer cells more susceptible to attack by the body's own immune system. The work is laying the foundation for future human and veterinary clinical trials.

**Lauren Trepanier** was awarded an American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation grant to support research into exposure to environmental chemicals in boxer dogs with lymphoma.

Abstracts are due Feb. 15 for virtual poster presentations at the annual UW-Madison Global Health Symposium. Presentations are welcome from faculty, staff, students and community colleagues across disciplines. [Learn more](#) and [submit an abstract](#). Students (graduate, professional and undergraduate) can compete for \$500 scholarships for the Best Virtual Poster Presentations at the symposium. [View the guidelines](#).

## Upcoming Events

### UW-Madison Distinguished Teaching Awards Virtual Recognition Event

Feb. 16

5 p.m.

[Zoom link](#)

*Note: Whenever possible, UW-Madison recommends that events and meetings continue to be held virtually; it is highly recommended that in-person events allow for virtual participation by those who choose not to or are unable to attend in person. Any in-person events must follow campus policy for [schools/colleges/divisions](#), and [student organizations](#).*

## SVM in the News

[COVID-19 Spread Without Symptoms a Key Lesson Learned a Year into Pandemic](#)  
*Wisconsin State Journal*

[More Contagious Coronavirus Variant Found In Wisconsin](#)  
*Wisconsin Public Radio*

[Captive Gorillas Test Positive for Coronavirus](#)  
*Science*

The Mink Pandemic Is No Joke  
*The Atlantic*

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



AP Photo/Sergei Grits

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