

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

March 2021

A Challenging and Sad Month

I've elected to postpone presenting our third strategic priority, Delivering Outstanding Animal Care, to next month, given the events of March.

We continue to mourn the [death of Joshua Smith](#). Although he had been at the UW School of Veterinary Medicine for a relatively short time, he had already made a long-lasting impact on many people's lives. A compassionate caregiver, friend, loved one and passionate educator were just a few of his attributes. We all mourn Josh's death, but I particularly want to reach out and offer my condolences to his friends and family and those in our emergency service who loved and worked with him. The school has provided a broad array of resources for any who need them, and I encourage you to take advantage of those opportunities. I've also highlighted by email this past month joint efforts by the AVMA and AAVMC around mental health and suicide prevention, and specific AAVMC initiatives that will be focused on these issues in the coming years. (If you believe that you or someone you know is in crisis, please get help immediately by calling 1-800-273-8255 or contacting the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's Crisis Chat team](#).)



The month of March also highlighted ongoing issues around racism and, in particular in the case of the Atlanta spa shootings, against our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. The murder of eight people in Atlanta, with six from Asian or Asian American heritage, highlights the continued work all of us need to do to address racism and violence against any community.

I also want to reach out to the Class of 2021, who, given that the end of their third year and their entire fourth year occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, has paid a painful price. They were unable to hold an in-person Blue Coat Ceremony in the spring of 2020, and UW-Madison has decided that the only in-person graduation events will be held at Camp Randall on Saturday, May 8, and no campus unit or school can hold an individual event celebrating graduation this year. I know that each of you in the class of 2021 is disappointed. We will do all that we can in a virtual setting to celebrate your achievements and accomplishments as new doctors of veterinary medicine.

I wish all of you the best during these challenging times and very much hope as more and more of us can be vaccinated that we will emerge from this dark tunnel into the light.

UW Veterinary Care Updates from the Director

Welcome to new hospital employees **Meghan Brieske**, client care liaison for the Neurology, Dermatology and Oncology services, and **Rebecca**



Hunt, medical lab technician in the clinical pathology lab.

In recognition of all of your efforts, I hope you can take a moment to appreciate this across-the-board kudos from a recent client:

"There is no other pet hospital that can compare to UW-Madison. Everyone is excellent. I am constantly telling everyone how wonderful you are. I'm hoping very soon things can go back to the way they were. I have never seen a pet hospital so great in every area. -Judy, Loves Park, Illinois

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

From the Archives



In this 1991 photo, UW School of Veterinary Medicine students pet **Blockhead**, a teaching dog who belonged to former senior instructional specialist **Kalen Nichols**. Blockhead served as an anatomy palpation dog for first-year students in the Fundamental Principles of Anatomy course. According to Nichols, he also sat at the center of the MD-1 lab during small animal anatomy exams. "He helped calm the students and made them feel happy in what might be for some a stressful situation," Nichols says. Blockhead is part of a long-standing tradition of live dogs and cats being part of clinical anatomy sessions. These classes bring to life what students learn in the laboratory, and give students who may not have pets a much-needed connection to these special animals. Photo credit: Jeff Miller/University of Wisconsin—Madison Archives.

School News

Spring magazine: The spring issue of *On Call* mailed in March and is also [available online](#) and in the Veterinary Medicine building. This issue highlights several examples of the school and hospital's national leadership -- in advancing COVID-19 and other infectious disease research; through a [unique patient case](#) that required novel, collaborative reconstructive surgery; continued strength in radiation therapy with our [new cutting-edge](#)

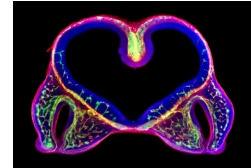


machine; and more.

Payroll updates: UW System is hosting a [series of town halls](#) this spring on the new single payroll initiative. Information will be provided on how the new single biweekly payroll system will affect your paychecks and how you can prepare for the change.

Climate report: Each semester, UW–Madison reports on the progress being made in creating an equitable, inclusive environment that enables all students, faculty and staff to thrive. [The newest report](#) highlights campuswide initiatives, including efforts to recruit more diverse faculty and staff and enhance students' mental health, as well as a variety of actions being taken by schools, colleges and units (including the SVM). The school will be sharing its climate survey results this month.

Entries sought in campus contest: The 11th annual UW–Madison Cool Science Image Contest is now accepting entries. This contest is open to UW–Madison faculty, staff, students, postdocs and others with campus connections, and you may enter as individuals or groups. [Send your images and videos.](#)



Teaching and Learning News

An update from Peggy Schmidt, associate dean for professional programs

Curriculum revision: The PREPARE Graduates Task Force is currently in phase two of the revision process -- the design phase. Five new working groups have formed to identify educational technology needs for supporting the revised curriculum, develop professional and clinical skills components, define the overall curricular structure, and disseminate work in scholarly meetings and publications. Evidence-based recommendations and feedback from recent workshops are underpinning these current efforts. Current work will lead to proposed curricular structures to be shared out to the SVM community and stakeholders in early summer. The participatory design process will continue through additional workshops and listening sessions to further refine the revised curriculum.

Faculty and Staff News

Congratulations to **Chris Snyder**, who will become the school's new associate dean for clinical affairs effective June 1. And thank you to **Ruthanne Chun** for her outstanding service in this role for more than 10 years.

Congratulations also to **Kristen Bernard**, the new chair of the Department of Pathobiological Sciences effective July 1. Thank you to **Chuck Czuprynski** for his outstanding leadership of the department. **Related:** Bernard will host a [virtual town hall on COVID-19 vaccine education](#) with Jasmine Zapata from the UW School of Medicine and Public Health on April 7 at noon. The event is part of a town hall series organized by the American Society for Virology.

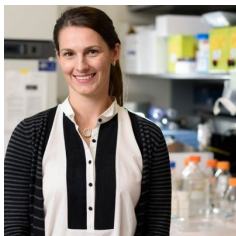
Welcome to **Kyle McMillen**, who has joined the SVM Research Administration team with several years' experience on campus. Kyle will assist with federal grant proposal submissions, federal grant and fellowship reporting and management, and oversight of the school's NIH-funded training grants and fellowships. With sponsored research growing in the SVM over the last few years, the school has formalized a new Research Administration unit under the dean's office to expand expertise and bandwidth.

Daniel Radecki, a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Assistant Professor **Jayshree Samanta**, received the [Postdoc Excellence in Service Award](#) from the UW–Madison Postdoctoral Association on March 26.

Student News

A new [online global health certificate program](#) for graduate/professional students has been approved by UW–Madison, with an official launch in fall 2021. The 11-credit, primarily asynchronous online curriculum offers flexibility to complete the certificate within the context of your primary degree program. Applications are accepted until May 31. An [information session for DVM students](#) will be held on Zoom today, April 1, at 11 a.m.

Research News



A new study led by clinical assistant professor **Erin Lashnits**, published in the journal *Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases*, shows [evidence of Bartonella infection](#) in the blood of people with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder. The study was, by design, not able to demonstrate a causal link between Bartonella infection and schizophrenia. However, Lashnits believes it supports the need for follow-up studies. The researchers plan to proceed with a larger study.

When **Brittney Maehl**, a veteran of the Navy, learned of the opportunity to help her dog **Chester** -- and other cancer patients -- through a clinical trial at UW Veterinary Care funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, she was beyond excited. “I thought I was counting down hours left with my lovely boy, but after our initial biopsy and exam at the vet school, I left with so much hope,” she recalls. [Learn more about Chester and the study.](#)

The next [WARF Therapeutics proposal deadline](#) is **April 5**. WARF Therapeutics collaborates with researchers to advance work closer to clinical testing. The program invests in the development of drug-like molecules using industry-centric drug discovery resources and approaches led by a team of preclinical drug discovery experts.

The annual UW–Madison [Education Research Poster Fair](#) is seeking proposals for posters that spotlight education research across campus. Faculty, instructional professionals, post-doctoral students, teaching assistants, advisors, other campus leaders, graduate and undergraduate students are invited to submit posters for this year’s virtual event. The deadline is **April 20**.

A reminder that the School of Veterinary Medicine has announced a call for proposals for research advancing feline health and welfare, supported by generous donations to the school's growing Feline Health Fund. All SVM tenure- and clinical-track faculty and instructors are eligible to apply. Proposals should be submitted by **July 15**. Find more information in emails from Dale Bjorling.

A Day in the Life



Excerpted from @marie_bucko on Instagram: || THANK YOU ♥ || To the SAVMA Chapter at UW-Madison & officer teams, veterinary students, national SAVMA Exec board, House of Delegates, Chapter presidents, past EB teams | the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Board of Directors, Student Initiatives team, AVMA House of Delegates | IVSA & AMSA leadership | University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine & advisors | Justin and the non-vet friends and family --> YOU ARE THE REAL LEADERS - THANK YOU. ... As I transition into my role of Immediate Past President, I can't begin to express how much SAVMA has filled my heart all 4 years of veterinary school. I'm grateful. I'm honored. I will love you forever. I'm ready as I ever will be to see what the next adventure holds. #bettertogether ☐☐

Upcoming Events

With increased COVID-19 testing, fewer positive cases, and continued vaccinations, UW-Madison has made changes to its [campus events policy](#). Effective March 8, the new policy will allow up to 50 people to gather indoors and up to 150 people outdoors. Facial coverings and physical distancing are required. A green "Building Access Granted" status is needed to enter campus buildings.

April 6

SVM Faculty Meeting

Noon (virtual)

Zoom invitation will be sent before meeting.

April 14

2021 Global Health Symposium

Fostering Resilience Through Indigenous

Wisdom & Scientific Knowledge

11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. (virtual)

[Learn more and register.](#)

April 24

SVM Celebration of Excellence

6 p.m. (virtual)

Invitation/link will be shared via email.

May 8

SVM Investiture Ceremony

9 a.m. (virtual)

Details and link to follow.

May 8

UW-Madison Graduate and Professional School Commencement Ceremony

4 p.m. (in-person event)

**[In-person commencement](#) will be held at Camp Randall Stadium. Family members and friends will be invited to watch a livestream, among other virtual engagement opportunities. The in-person events are contingent on continued progress in controlling COVID-19.*



Madison Companies Still Pursuing COVID-19 Vaccines, Saying More Options Needed
Wisconsin State Journal

VA Funds UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine Cancer Study in Dogs
WMTV NBC15

'Not One More': Veterinary Community Draws Attention To High Suicide Rates After Loss of Their Own
WISC-TV3

Selfie-Taking Tourists Risk Giving Wild Gorillas COVID-19, Other Diseases
National Geographic

“We made an impact as a group when we entered the new School of Veterinary Medicine in 1983 and we could come full circle if we could, again, make an impact as a class, for many years to come.”

-Bradley Poff DVM'87 in an email to his peers from the UW School of Veterinary Medicine Class of 1987. Poff inspired a collective effort among classmates toward a student scholarship campaign. To date, Poff and fellow alumni have donated more than \$38,000 to the SVM Charter Class of 1987 Scholarship Fund.

