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

Message from the Dean | September 2020

## Welcome Back ... To Interesting Times

I want to welcome our students back to their fall semester beginning tomorrow. I know none of us planned for the need to close in-person instruction this past spring or to create a hybrid learning experience for our students this academic year. Our faculty and staff have been working tirelessly over the last five months to create outstanding learning opportunities in a hybrid format with the hope that sometime this academic year we will be back to full in-person instruction.



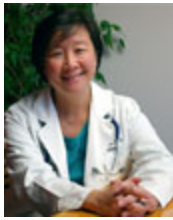
For now, all we can do is try to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on the SVM community and our broader communities. Wearing face coverings, physically distancing, self-monitoring, and being smart about how we interact with others outside of the school will be critical to allowing us to maintain some form of in-person instruction.

It is my pleasure to welcome Richard Barajas, the school's new director for equity, diversity and inclusion, who starts today. Richard will be instrumental to the school's future success and I very much look forward to working with him in this incredibly important area.

Lastly, I want to welcome the Class of 2024 to their first year at the School of Veterinary Medicine. Although you are beginning your experience at the school in an unusual manner, as I highlighted in my [August Dean's Message](#), I know you will find the school to be an exciting place to both learn and work. Welcome to the SVM family!

## UW Veterinary Care Updates from the Director

Several new staff members have joined us recently. Welcome to **Kelly Austin**, a second-shift technologist with the Diagnostic Imaging service; **Henry Benchimol**, vet assistant in the large animal hospital; **Nicole Birschbach**, technologist with the Diagnostic Imaging service; **Sydney Galles**, a social work intern starting Sept. 2 in



partnership with the UW School of Social Work; **Patrice Laszewski**, a financial specialist in Hospital Purchasing; **Kathleen Smith**, radiology technologist with Diagnostic Imaging; and **David Valko**, sterile processing technician in Central Supply. In addition, two hospital staff have moved into new roles: **Jade Bricco**, CVT, now with Large Animal Surgery, and **Shawna Conkle**, transitioning from the hospital's small animal reception area to medical records.

For our hospital faculty and staff, I know these are challenging times. Even more challenging than the hard work we were already putting in each day pre-pandemic. Your dedication is valued immensely by myself, colleagues, and our clients and patients. We serve animals that for so many people are treasured members of the family, reflected in this brief client comment:

"I think UW Vet Care is the BEST. That is why I bring my FAMILY here."

-Dale

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

## School News

Several updates related to COVID-19:

- In May the School of Veterinary Medicine implemented a Work-Share program for the majority of faculty and staff because the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a temporary closure of the hospital. Re-opening was gradual, and with an anticipated economic recession and diminished caseload SVM leadership wanted to ensure that as few jobs as possible were lost because of the anticipated decrease in hospital revenue. Fortunately, demand for veterinary medical care has not diminished. The hospital ended July with a positive cumulative cash balance, which we expect to continue. Because of this, all Work-Share in the SVM ceased as of August 31 for monthly paid staff and August 29 for biweekly paid staff.
- With activity returning to campus, University Health Services is ramping up its [testing efforts](#) for COVID-19. A free testing site for students, faculty and staff has opened at Henry Mall, the first of three planned on campus.
- Chancellor **Rebecca Blank** and a group of top UW-Madison leaders held a Smart Restart update for the campus community on August 21, covering a wide variety of topics and questions submitted by email. You can watch the entire YouTube video [here](#), or [break it down by sections](#) according to topic.
- For more information about the university's comprehensive plan for resuming campus activities, visit [smartrestart.wisc.edu](http://smartrestart.wisc.edu).

In August alumnus **Doug Kratt DVM'98** [began his term](#) as American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) president.

**Simon Lygo-Baker**, from the Department of Higher Education at the University of Surrey, will join the school virtually this year, again working with SVM faculty and staff on a number of aspects of teaching and learning, including continued development of a progressive curriculum and support of clinical teaching by interns and residents.

Under the leadership of **Peggy Schmidt**, associate dean for professional programs, the school's PREPARE Graduates Task Force has begun work with the following charge: "Using best available evidence in teaching and learning, design the optimum curriculum for preparing graduates to succeed in entry level clinical practice or pursue the wide array of other career opportunities in veterinary medicine including those in research, public health, academia, or specialization, continually enhance



AVMA President Doug Kratt.

their professional competence, and contribute to the health and wellbeing of animals, people, and the environment they interact within." Task force members include: **Steve Johnson** and **Karen Hershberger** (Comparative Biosciences), **Calico Schmidt** and **Allison Dusick** (Pathobiological Sciences), **Amy Nichelason** and **Julie Walker** (Medical Sciences), **Michelle Turek** and **Ellison Bentley** (Surgical Sciences), **Nigel Cook** (Curriculum Committee representative), **Anna Hausmann DVM'17** and **Nathan Bollig DVM'19** (recent alumni), **Stephanie Evenson DVM'04** and **Tom Bach DVM'94** (alumni/WVMA stakeholder), **Lynn Maki**, **Richard Barajas**, **Kathy Hendricks**, **Anne Howaniec** and **Molly Harris** (Academic Affairs), and two students, to be selected.

## Faculty and Staff News

Welcome to **Richard Barajas**, the school's first director of diversity, equity and inclusion; **Andrea Pohly**, a clinical diagnostic track assistant professor in anatomic pathology with the Department of Pathobiological Sciences and the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory; and **Dane Rahoi**, who has joined Pathobiological Sciences as clinical instructor in anatomic pathology.

Clinical Assistant Professor **Elizabeth Alvarez** recently delivered a continuing education webinar related to understanding bias as part of a [free Diversity Matters series](#) from Hill's.

## Student News

Eighteen DVM students from the UW School of Veterinary Medicine participated in the 2020 Veterinary Summer Scholars Research Program, adjusted due to the pandemic to account for virtual learning and training. In addition, five dual-degree trainees presented research during the colloquium that followed the virtual summer research conference. [View participants' names, research projects and mentors.](#)

**Serena George DVMx'23** won an article contest hosted by the International Veterinary Students' Association with her work titled [Supporting the Human-Animal Bond to Advance Animal Welfare](#). The article explores how the rich relationship between people and pets might be used to make progress on animal welfare issues, especially in shelter medicine. George will receive a trip to the IVSA Animal Welfare Conference in Malaysia in 2021.



Serena George and Reeba.

**Eddy Cruz DVMx'23** is a recipient of a Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research [2020 Veterinary Student Research Fellowship](#) in partnership with the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. Cruz is assessing the effect of sulfur metabolites in the gut microbiota of mammals on Salmonella gut colonization and environmental survival, with the goal of providing targets for anti-Salmonella strategies.

**Abbey Williams**, a second-year Comparative Biomedical Sciences PhD student and member of Lisa Arendt's lab, was selected for a fellowship to participate in the Training, Education and Mentoring in Science Program. This two-year program emphasizes scholarly and career development to increase the number of underrepresented student populations who complete PhD programs.

**Sai Krishna Bhamidipati**, a Comparative Biomedical Sciences master's student in the lab of Jayshree Samanta, had a poem selected as part of the Bus Lines Poetry Contest 2020 by Metro Transit and Madison Poet Laureate Angie Trudell Vasquez. The winning poems will be transformed into moving art by Edgewood College Graphic Design students.

## Research News

Four testing sites in Madison have begun a [saliva COVID-19 test](#), which could provide simpler and faster results, according to UW-Madison researchers that include School of Veterinary

Medicine Professor **Tom Friedrich**. Researchers are hoping that this new form of testing could help in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Daniel Radecki**, a post-doctoral fellow in the lab of Jayshree Samanta, received the Sanofi travel award presented by the American Society for Neurochemistry to support an outstanding, translationally focused post-doctoral fellow's participation at the society's annual meeting.

Several members of the Department of Comparative Biosciences have recently received new grants or grant renewals:

- **Kenneth Rivera-Gonzalez** (diversity supplement, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences)
- **Anne Turco** (NIH F31 fellowship on 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD) and prostate-related urinary dysfunction)
- **Troy Hornberger** (UW 2020 award related to diabetes and metabolism)
- **Linda Schuler** (renewal five-year NIH R01 to continue research on the extracellular matrix in the tumor microenvironment)
- **Ted Golos** and collaborators (five-year NIH R01 to use MRI to assess nonhuman primate models of fetal growth restriction; NIH R21 and UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research pilot grants to study targeted nanoparticle delivery for placental therapeutics)

## Upcoming Events

Whenever possible, the [university recommends](#) that events and meetings continue to be held virtually. The new campus events policy for schools, colleges, divisions and departments can be found [here](#) and for registered student organizations [here](#).

### Virtual School of Veterinary Medicine Town Hall

September 15

Noon-1 p.m.

*Details to follow by email*

## SVM in the News

Fall Outlook at US, Canadian Veterinary Schools

*VIN News Service*

UW Researchers Developing Faster COVID Test That Could Allow Frequent, Repeat Testing Anywhere

*WKOW*

Lameness Prevention Starts in the Heifer Pen

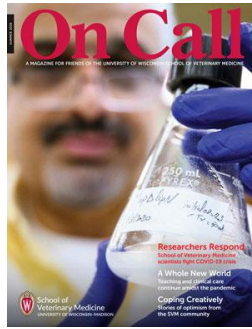
*Dairy Herd Management*

Local Veterinarian to Head the American Veterinary Medical Association

*WKBT-TV*



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



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