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NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA • COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE



Anatomy professor honored as collegewide Teacher of the Year

BY SARAH CAREY

Dr. Kevin Anderson, an associate professor of anatomy and neurobiology in the department of physiological sciences, has been named the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine's 2010 College Council Teacher of the Year.

The council annually selects an outstanding teacher to receive the designation, based on criteria including knowledge of subject matter, clarity of presentation, concern for students' mastery of subject, fairness, enthusiasm for teaching and overall interest in student welfare. The winner receives \$2,000 and a plaque.

Anderson received his undergraduate degree from Washington State University and subsequently a master's degree, also from Washington State. He received his Ph.D. in anatomy from the University of Kentucky at Lexington in 1984.

This is the second time Anderson has been honored with the college council's Teacher of the Year Award, the first being in 1990. A member of the UF veterinary faculty since 1988, Anderson has taught anatomy to every single class since then. UF veterinary students have chosen him several times to receive their top teaching awards, given by individual classes and also by the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

In 1994, the college awarded Anderson its prestigious C.E. Cornelius Young Investigator Award for his research.

His most recent research focus relates to the biomarkers of traumatic brain injury. This work has received funding from the Veteran's Administration and other sources.

Anderson also has served for many years as faculty advisor and ride team leader to Team Vet Med, a group of cyclists that ride regularly throughout the year and who also raise money for student scholarships. In recognition of Anderson's commitment to the group, the scholarship funded by the annual Horse Farm Hundred ride was renamed in his honor last year.

"My philosophy of teaching is really quite simple," Anderson said. "I think the best teachers are the ones who provide the necessary guidance so the students can learn the materials on their own, with minimal input from the instructor."

He added that he preferred to think he could facilitate the learning process by challenging students, rather than merely lecturing them or providing a list of anatomical facts.

"This can be accomplished several ways, but one of the simplest and most effective is just to ask the students questions rather than directly give them the answers," Anderson said. "It can sometimes be a new experience for students to learn this way, but I feel that they will retain the relevant and important answers more readily than rote memorization. More importantly, I think that learning in this way helps to foster the ability of students to learn where to find an appropriate answer to a challenging question."



Dr. Kevin Anderson

Clinical pathologist receives UF Research Foundation Professorship

Dr. Rick Alleman, a professor of clinical pathology at the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine, has received a UF Research Foundation professorship.

Sponsored by the university's Division of Sponsored Research, the professorships are awarded to tenured faculty campuswide for distinguished research and scholarship. The honor includes a \$5,000 salary increase each year for three years and a one-time \$3,000 award for research support.

A board-certified clinical pathologist, Alleman graduated from Louisiana State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1980. He worked in private practice as a veterinarian for several years prior to returning to the academic environment to complete a residency in clinical pathology at the UF veterinary college in 1992. Subsequently, Alleman received his Ph.D., also from UF, in 1995 in molecular biology of infectious disease.

Alleman began his UF faculty career as an instructor in 1994 in the college's department of physiological sciences. Since then, he has progressed through the faculty ranks to become a full professor. His primary research focus has been on developing molecular methods of diagnosis and the persistence of infection from tick-borne pathogens, specifically *Anaplasma* and *Ehrlichia*. This work has resulted in the recognition of different antigens used in the serological diagnosis of infections with these pathogens, which commonly affect livestock in parts of the world, but which are also known to affect people and other animals, such as dogs.

He has coauthored four patents, three of which resulted in license agreements for market development.

A favorite with students, Alleman has twice been named the UF veterinary college's Teacher of the Year. He also has received numerous other awards over the years for his teaching.

"Even more important than his list of career highlights is the fact that Dr. Alleman is an outstanding faculty citizen at UF," wrote Alleman's department chairman, Paul Davenport, Ph.D. in nominating him for the award. "He is always willing to collaborate with colleagues, and his mentorship of veterinary clinical pathology residents has helped lay the foundation for future clinical scientists."



Dr. Rick Alleman

New video series aims to better instruct veterinary students in all aspects of spay/neuter surgery

The Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine has partnered with the country's leading spay/neuter training center to produce a series of videos aimed at educating greater numbers of veterinary professionals about best practices in high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter surgical techniques.

The first in a planned series of the surgical training videos details procedures for performing surgery on puppies and kittens as small as 2 pounds and as young as six to eight weeks of age.

"Spaying and neutering animals prior to sexual maturity prevents unintended litters and ensures numerous well-established health benefits for them," explained Dr. Brenda Griffin, an adjunct associate professor of shelter medicine at the University of Florida and UF's lead veterinarian in developing the new teaching tool. "In addition, performing these procedures at an early age offers the advantage of shorter surgical and recovery times."

Griffin, a board-certified internist, joined forces with two board-certified surgeons, Dr. Philip Bushby of Mississippi State and Dr. Mark Bohling of the University of Tennessee, along with Dr. Karla Brestle of the Humane Alliance National Spay/Neuter Response Team. The video was filmed at the NSNRT's 13,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art surgical training center nestled in Asheville, N.C.'s Blue Ridge Mountains, where more than 23,000 sterilization surgeries are performed annually.

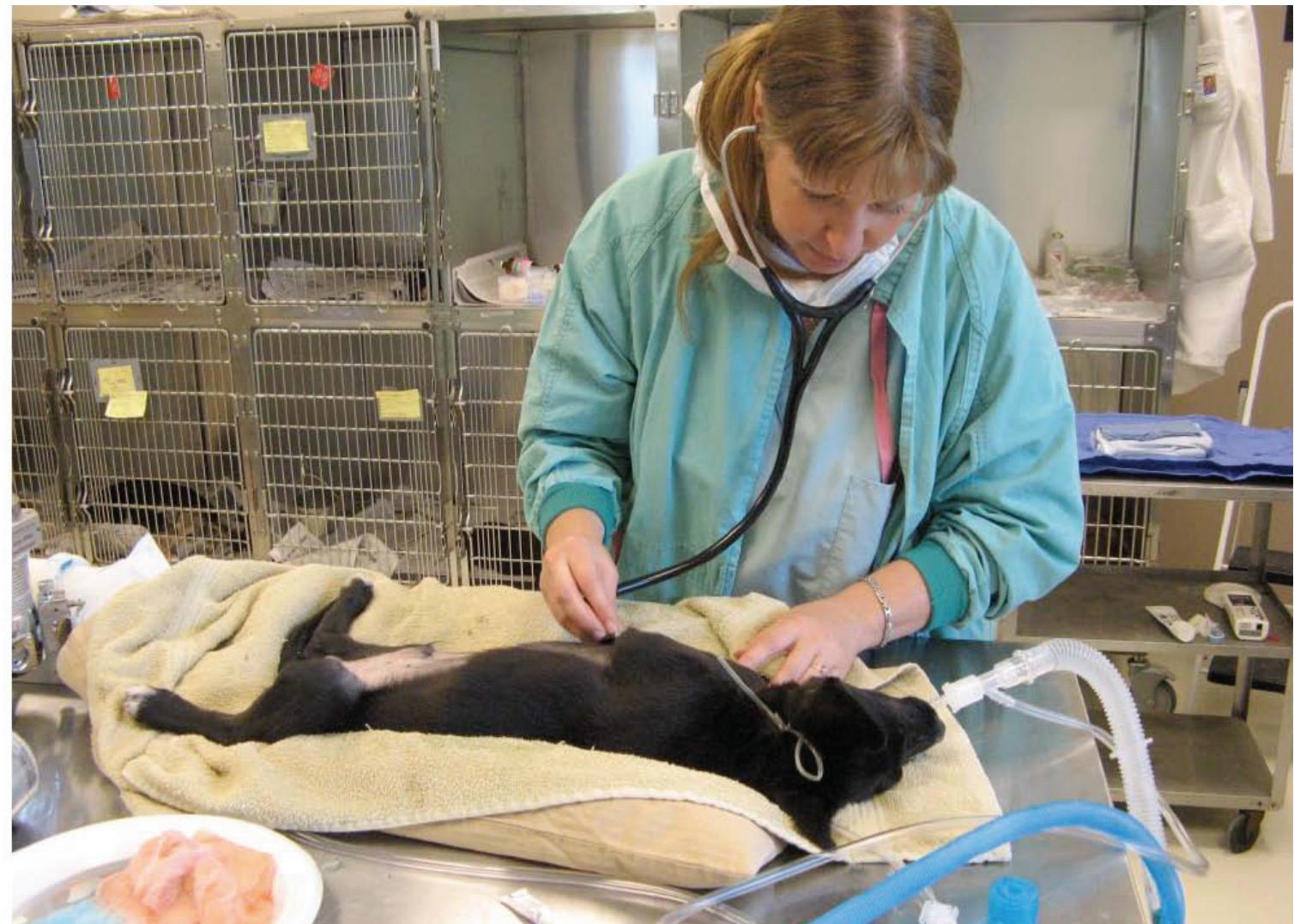
"Veterinarians and students already have the opportunity to participate in intensive hands-on surgical continuing education at the training center, but the new video series will make training available to veterinarians and students around the world," Griffin said. "The first video demonstrates techniques designed to improve efficiency while maximizing patient comfort and safety."

"It is technically much easier to spay a 2-pound puppy than a 75-pound adult. Students at Florida are already taught the skills illustrated in this video," said Dr. Natalie Isaza, the Merial clinical assistant professor of shelter medicine at UF and chief of the college's shelter medicine service. "Our goal is to make this information available to practitioners who want to learn these techniques as well."

Pediatric neutering was selected as the topic for the first training video because practitioners frequently lack confidence in the procedure and because neutering before puberty offers the best opportunity to prevent overpopulation caused by accidental litters.

"We advise our students that the timing of spay-neuter surgery is very important," Griffin said. "Puppies and kittens should always be sterilized prior to adoption from animal shelters, including those as young as six weeks of age. Practitioners should routinely schedule their privately owned patients for surgery immediately following completion of the first vaccination series at approximately 4 months of age."

The video, funded by PetSmart Charities, is available for free viewing and download at www.humaneanalliance.org. A DVD will also be mailed to veterinary students at all U.S. veterinary colleges. The group plans to create additional instructional videos focusing on spaying large breed dogs, trap-neuter-return of feral cats, and novel techniques for improving surgical efficiency, anesthetic technique, patient safety, and post-surgical pain prevention.



Dr. Brenda Griffin monitors this young dog during preparation for surgery.

(Photo courtesy of Dr. Griffin)

CVM University Scholar: Caitlin Leibowitz will soon head to Boston for graduate studies in immunology

BY SARAH CAREY

Caitlin Leibowitz, this year's CVM University Scholar, will soon leave Dr. Dan Brown's laboratory to head for Boston, where she'll be pursuing a doctoral degree at Boston University. Her colleagues back in the lab say Leibowitz's aptitude for research and motivation bode well for the young woman's future career in the sciences.

"I was initially drawn to Dr. Brown's lab because it is a pathology and infectious disease lab," Leibowitz said. "When I was looking into potential research work, I e-mailed a number of labs that were primarily focused on pathology. Dr. Brown was kind enough to respond and offer me a volunteer position."

For the past year, Leibowitz has been working with Brown and Dr. Meghan May to become more familiar with the nature of scientific research.

"Caitlin first joined our group wanting very much to attend medical school, but it was soon clear that she had an incredible aptitude for research," May said. "Based on her lab experience, she changed her goals to prepare for a career as an investigator. I think that her selection to the University Scholars program was a well-deserved honor and was instrumental in her successful application to Boston University. We're very proud of her."

Leibowitz said she learned a number of laboratory techniques such as PCR and DNA purification and extraction that will be useful as she continues her studies.

"My work also helped me to begin developing some of the strategies that are useful when designing an experiment," Leibowitz said, adding that she is open-minded about what her scientific focus will be once she begins her studies at BU.

"Although I'm currently interested in immunology and autoimmune disorders, I realize that these interests may change as I begin my lab rotations," she said.

Leibowitz will graduate from UF this month with a bachelor of science degree in biology. Brown said he was impressed that Leibowitz had also received offers from the graduate schools at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of California at Los Angeles.

"We are very proud of Caitlin's accomplishments and prospects for the future, and the CVM made a very successful investment by supporting her," Brown said.

Each college at UF is allocated a certain number of University Scholarships, and the CVM only receives one spot because it doesn't offer an undergraduate curriculum.

"That's why it is very special to win that one spot," Brown said.

Scholars receive a \$2,000 cash stipend

Applicants work with faculty members to develop a specific research proposal, and the decision on which student is awarded the scholarship is made for the college by Dr. Charles Courtney, associate dean for research and graduate studies.



Caitlin Leibowitz



Dr. Dan Brown

Up and Running...An Evening at Zozo's

Drs. Suzie and Scott Kerns hosted a magical evening at their home in Ocala March 20 to acknowledge individuals who have been instrumental in caring for the couple's beloved dog, Zozo.

The event brought together friends and colleagues of the Kernses as well as clients of UF's Small Animal Rehabilitation and Fitness Program for a celebratory evening of food, music and visiting. A slide presentation available for viewing throughout the evening showed examples of patients receiving various aspects of rehabilitative care at UF.

The Kernses, along with Victoria Ford of Jacksonville and the programmatic efforts of Dr. Kristin Kirkby, have helped to make the Rehabilitation and Fitness Program one of the unique focuses of care available now to patients of UF's VMC.



Dr. Dion Osborne, a member of the UF CVM's Class of '98, and his wife, Sara.



Dr. Suzie Kerns, Dean Glen Hoffsis and Dr. Scott Kerns are shown with Zozo following the dinner event hosted by the Kernses. The Kernses wanted to recognize those who have been a part of Zozo's health and rehabilitation journey.



Dr. Shauna Cantwell, former UF CVM faculty member in anesthesiology; Dr. Cate McManus, UF Shelter Medicine resident; junior veterinary student Gina Barron and her husband, Robert Barron were among the guests.



Veterinary technician Wendy Davies, Dr. Kristin Kirkby and Deborah Cone visit before dinner. Cone's dog, Guinness, was a patient in soft tissue surgery and then rehabilitation.



Victoria Ford of Jacksonville, who helped support the creation of the new Small Animal Rehabilitation and Fitness Center through funding of the underwater treadmill, is shown with fellow program supporter and Zozo's mom, Dr. Suzie Kerns, an Ocala pediatrician.

Photos by Sarah Carey

Small animal surgeon honored as resident of the year by American Association of Veterinary Clinicians

University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine small animal surgery resident Dr. Stanley Kim has been named resident of the year by the American Association of Veterinary Clinicians.

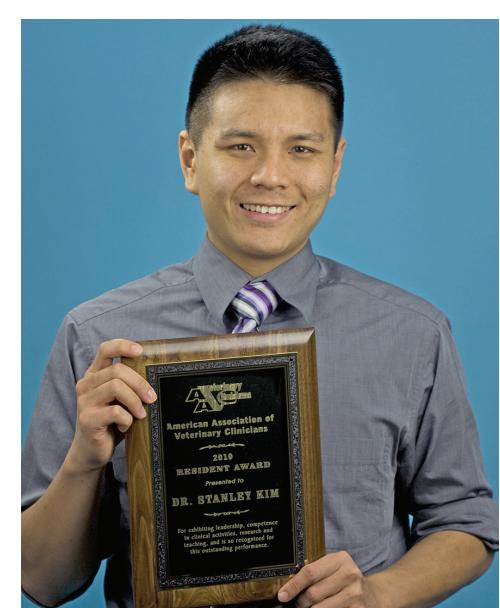
The award is presented annually to two residents who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishment and proficiency in the areas of clinical service, teaching and research.

Kim, who will complete his UF residency in June, has received several awards in recent years from the Veterinary Orthopedic Society and the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

"In addition to being an outstanding young clinical surgeon and educator, Dr. Kim has truly distinguished himself on the research front," said Dr. Daniel D. Lewis, professor of small animal surgery at UF. "He has already established himself as a recognized authority in the management of cranial cruciate ligament insufficiency in dogs."

Lewis added that Kim was the third UF small animal surgery resident to receive the AAVC's resident of the year award.

The AAVC's mission is to enhance the quality of and serve as an advocate for veterinary clinical teaching, service and research.



Dr. Stan Kim

Around the college



Dr. John Scheiderer of Purina accepted a plaque from Dean Glen Hoffsis on behalf of the Shelter Medicine Club for Purina's support of the shelter medicine clerkship during a luncheon held in VS-20 April 20.
(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Dr. Natalie Isaza, the Merial Clinical Assistant Professor of Shelter Medicine and coordinator of the shelter medicine clerkship, and Lauren Unger, president of the Shelter Medicine Club and Maddie's Shelter Medicine Research Fellow, on April 20 during the "Thank You, Purina" luncheon.
(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Laura Seheult, a member of the Class of 2012, holds up her personalized white coat in the Dean's Office conference room at the college on April 20. Seheult volunteered to help hang the coats in preparation for the Sophomore Professional Coating Ceremony, which will be held May 6 at UF's Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. The coating ceremony marks the sophomore veterinary students' transition into their junior year and the start of clinical rotations.
(Photo by Sarah Carey)

The Veterinary Page is the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's monthly electronic internal newsletter. Please send stories to Sarah Carey at careysk@vetmed.ufl.edu.



The Veterinary Business Management Association sponsored a seminar called "Closing the Gap" on April 9 during the FVMA's annual meeting. Shown from left to right with Dean Glen Hoffsis (standing in the back) are the club's officers: Chris Smith, Angela Avok, Shannon Skevakis, Sandra Heimenz, Laura Seheult, Lien D'Hespeel and Stephanie King.

Veterinary Business Management Association sponsors first-ever seminar at FVMA meeting

BY SARAH CAREY

This year's annual meeting of the Florida Veterinary Medical Association featured a first-ever forum focusing on the business concerns of students and practitioners, in a sort of speed-dating style venue that encouraged discussion among participants across a range of topics.

UF veterinary students who attended hope at least some lasting unions with future employers will result.

Members of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's chapter of the Veterinary Business Management Association, a student club, came up with the idea after attending the national VBMA meeting in Orlando in 2009. That meeting's focus had been veterinary student debt.

"We thought those debt-related discussions were helpful, but wanted to take some of the concepts in a different direction," said Laura Seheult, VBMA president and a member of the UF veterinary college's Class of 2012.

A committee was formed within UF's VBMA chapter to further pursue what might be done.

"We decided we wanted to address four topics," Seheult said. "One was business education in the veterinary curriculum; the second was qualifications of graduates and what practitioners are looking for; another topic was mentorship and internships; and finally, we wanted to discuss marketing yourself and your practice."

The result was the "Closing the Gap" seminar.

"All in all, this was a hugely successful event that we hope to improve and repeat annually at FVMA," said Stephanie King, a member of the UF CVM's Class of 2010 and VBMA's senior advisor. King chaired the committee that organized the event.

"Phil Hinkle (FVMA's executive director) was especially amazing at helping us coordinate this effort, and I think that with this event, the students can start to feel a real presence of the FVMA in their career progression."

Practitioners, industry representatives, FVMA board members and even some UF CVM faculty participated in the forum, Seheult said.

"To accommodate the number of people, we decided to have 16 tables, four tables per topic, and that individuals would stay with each topic for 20 minutes, then move to the next topic table," Seheult said. "We even played the Jeopardy theme song to help the transition. At the end of each session, we collected sheets from each table to summarize the points discussed by each group."

The group's goal had been to have between 60 and 80 practitioners and industry representatives present, and the FVMA helped the students advertise the event in registration flyers.

"We ended up with 45-50 participants and were very pleased with that," Seheult said.

The biggest problem they experienced? People engaged so much at their tables that they didn't want to have to get up and move to the next discussion.

"Participants said in their feedback that they needed more time, that they were just having really good discussions," Seheult said, adding, "It's the first time we've ever done this as a club and we were just so excited about the results."

Feedback showed that for many students, one of the biggest issues involved the question of internship vs. mentorship.

"Students expressed that they are planning on doing an internship because they do not feel confident or experienced enough to go straight into a private practice after graduation," Seheult said. "But the practitioners gave the feedback that for them, mentorship could be just as good as an internship and might even be a better way to get to know the practice and how they run it."

For Seheult, that feedback was especially meaningful.

"Practitioners were saying, 'you guys aren't confident at all, but we support you,'" Seheult said. "I came away from this event feeling like I have a very good support network. Additionally, the FVMA let us know that they were here for the students, that they want to be involved in our education and help us grow. For me, that was so reassuring."