

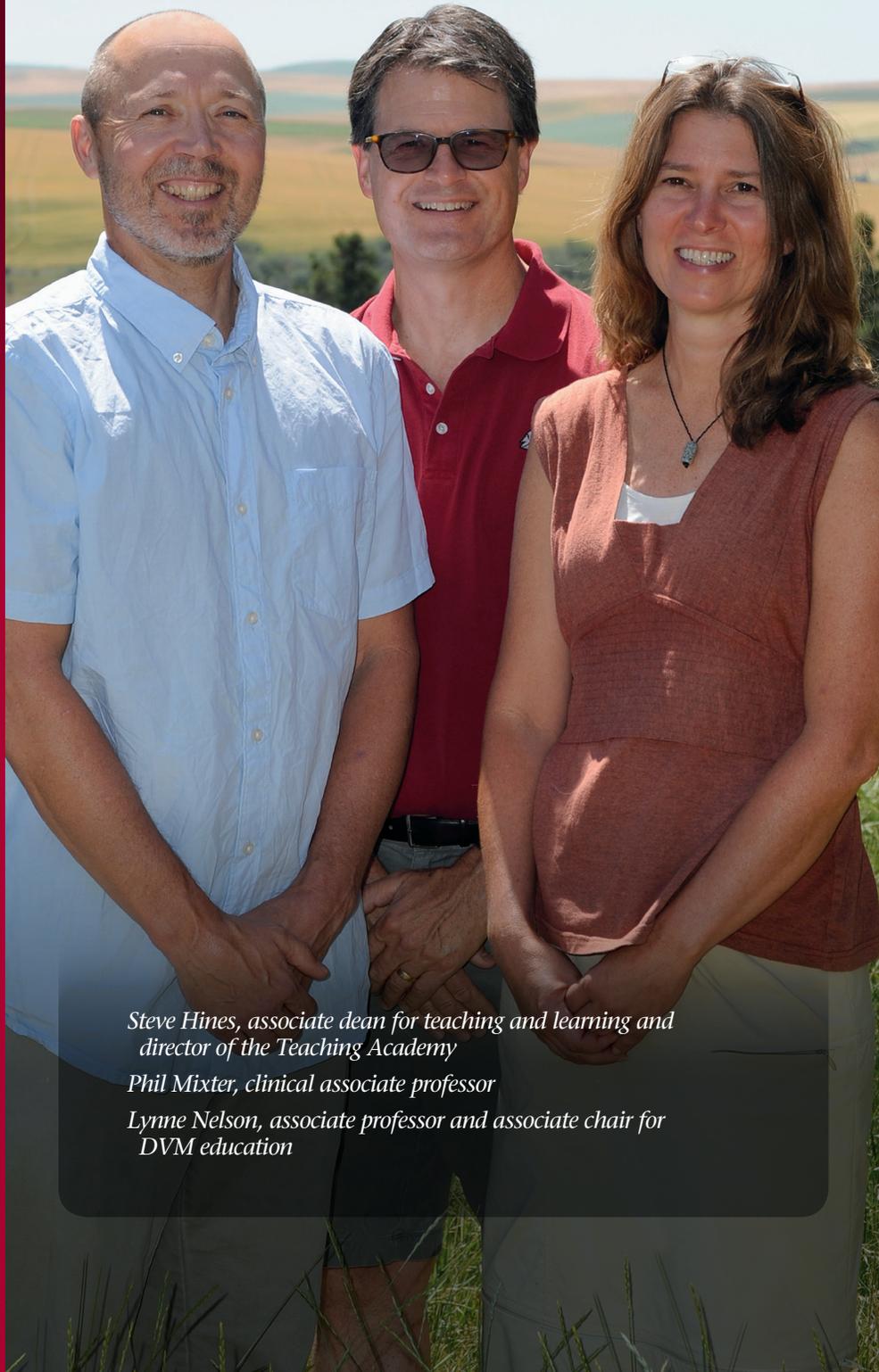
# Making Teaching Matter

## How Our Instructors are Enriching Student Education



**Veterinary**  
*executive report*

Fall 2013



*Steve Hines, associate dean for teaching and learning and director of the Teaching Academy*

*Phil Mixter, clinical associate professor*

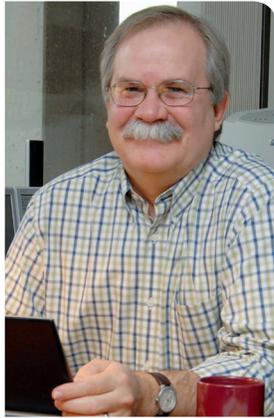
*Lynne Nelson, associate professor and associate chair for DVM education*

WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY



COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

# Message from the Dean



Dean Bryan Slinker  
WSU College of Veterinary Medicine

## Veterinary Executive Report WSU College of Veterinary Medicine

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So, what is a Teaching Academy? According to my dictionary, one of the definitions of *teaching* is the act of “guiding the studies of.” My dictionary further tells me that one definition of an *academy* is “a society of learned persons organized to advance art, science, or literature.” Thus, a Teaching Academy, or academy of teachers, might be thought of as:

A society of learned persons organized to advance the art, science, or literature of guiding the studies of learners.

What a cool thing to have in an institution of higher learning!

And the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine has one. In fact, we are, I think, still the only veterinary college in the nation to have one as systematically organized and as active as ours.

Teaching academies come in many shapes and sizes. After studying many models, our Teaching Academy, under the guidance of Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Steve Hines, chose to open membership in our “society of learned persons” to all faculty members dedicated to the scholarship of teaching and learning; that is, those who are serious about being scholarly in their approach as educators and equally serious about research to advance how we educate. Not only must they be serious about those things, they must also be willing to put in the effort to work with like-minded colleagues to improve our educational programs and student outcomes at all levels, whether DVM health professions, undergraduate, or graduate education. The model chosen is a good fit for Cougs—inclusive but not for show—if you want to be involved you are welcome, but you have to lift your share of the load and live up to a set of community expectations that can be found on our membership pages (see box on right).

**The model chosen is a good fit for Cougs—inclusive but not for show—if you want to be involved you are welcome, but you have to lift your share of the load and live up to a set of community expectations.**

—Dr. Bryan Slinker

**Making Teaching Matter.** This is their tagline. This is what drives them, and I cannot tell you how pleased I am with what Dr. Hines and our society of learned persons has accomplished (their 2012 annual report gives you a great idea and I urge you to spend some time reviewing it). It is heartening to know how much they have achieved, and equally heartening to me that there is a thirst for more. I hope if you get the chance you will tell them “thank you” for their seriousness of purpose and effort to help improve the education of future generations of health professionals and scientists. We

Cougs are proud of many things we do well, but I am especially proud of the work this society of learned persons does on behalf of our college and the health science professions. I am also gratified that our new Consortium of Western Regional Colleges of Veterinary Medicine—itsself a very cool thing!—has chosen as its first joint project the creation of a Western Regional Teaching

Academy to bring like-minded educators together from the five veterinary colleges in the western United States.

You should feel really good about this—your college continues to lead the way.

Go Cougs!

Dr. Bryan Slinker, Dean  
WSU College of Veterinary Medicine

Read the WSU Teaching Academy 2012 Annual Report  
[go.wsu.edu/TA\\_AnnualReport](http://go.wsu.edu/TA_AnnualReport)

Learn more about the Western Regional Teaching Academy  
[go.wsu.edu/WRTA](http://go.wsu.edu/WRTA)

Read more about Teaching Academy membership  
[go.wsu.edu/TA\\_Membership](http://go.wsu.edu/TA_Membership)

# Survey Launched to Help Improve Family Health

Traveling by bicycle, community interviewers visit homes in Asembo, Kenya, to learn how animal and human disease impacts a family's health, access to education, and economic well-being. They will visit more than 1,400 households four times each year over several years to ask about their nutrition, family members' health, household assets, and health of their animals. They collect the data on a handheld computer, or PDA, so that it can be sent back to Pullman the next day for analysis.



*Community volunteers interviewing a family in Asembo, Kenya.*

The goal is to reduce poverty and hunger and improve health and education.

"Animals are a major financial and nutritional asset for these families," said Guy Palmer, director of the Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health. "When animals are healthier, families tend to be healthier."

Last February, the Allen School launched the Population Based Animal Syndromic Surveillance and the Socio-Economic Survey in collaboration with the Kenya Medical Research Institute and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (known as the KEMRI/CDC Research and Public Health Collaboration) and the University of Washington. The project is led onsite by Dr. Thumbi Mwangi, clinical assistant professor in the Allen School.

Besides asking about nutrition in the house, the health of their animals, and demographics such as age, occupation, and number of children, researchers are also asking about household assets. For families in east Africa, assets may include

their livestock, plows, bicycles, tractor, radios, or motorcycles. Previous research has shown that when the health of animals improves, it increases the family's assets. And these increases tend to go to education and health care for children.

If their hypothesis is right and healthier animals can lead to more money spent on children's health and education, it could have long term positive affects for these communities. For example, in rural populations and peri-urban or urban slums, children often do not receive adequate nutrition or health care. According to Dr. Palmer, children in these regions have the greatest incidence of stunted growth from insufficient protein combined with diseases that cause diarrhea. Roughly 40 percent of children in sub-Saharan Africa are affected by stunting.

"One of the things we are looking at is the flow of food...its availability to a household and how it is distributed in the household," said Palmer. "Does it go to the most vulnerable populations—pregnant women and children—within the home?"

Ultimately, they are looking for effective interventions to improve the quality of families' lives. Palmer emphasized that it will be important to assess any interventions not just once, but on an ongoing basis.

"Integrating continuous assessment into the program drives a continuous improvement," said Palmer. "We can be more effective if we focus on the most impactful interventions. And we will reduce costs by eliminating ineffective ones."

*A family in Asembo, Kenya.*



# Making Teaching Matter

## How Our Instructors are Enriching Student Education

After giving a test to third-year DVM students in her small-animal medicine class, associate professor Lynne Nelson made a startling discovery. She found that when students were given the name of a disease, they had no trouble listing the symptoms. But when presented with a patient scenario listing those same symptoms, many students were unable to work backward to make a diagnosis.

“It really showed how well they do on recall versus clinical problem solving,” says Nelson. “I wondered why there such a big difference in skills and how I could help them get better at using the knowledge.”

Dr. Nelson is one of a growing number of faculty members at the college to integrate active learning into the classroom curriculum. For example, during lectures Dr. Nelson will go over different aspects of a patient’s case with her students. On Fridays, known in her classroom as “Flip Fridays,” students take the information they learned during the week to make diagnoses and recommend treatments.

“It is how we expect them to think about a case when they hit the clinical floor,” said Nelson. “After this class they at least know how to start to approach a case and where to find answers to their questions.”

Taylor Gwinn ('13 DVM), now a veterinary intern at WSU, took Dr. Nelson’s class during her third year. She found that compared to traditional lecture classes, with active learning she didn’t have to study the material as long to remember it.

“Partly it was because I understood the material better when it was taught to me this way,” says Gwinn. “With lectures, I would have had to go over and over the material because I didn’t learn it as well the first time.”

And because she could walk through a patient case slower and without consequence in class, it was also a good stepping stone

from her third-year classes to fourth-year clinics. As an intern, she has used those active teaching principles to better teach current students.

Faculty at the college created the Teaching Academy in 2010 to foster this type of innovative curriculum. Compared to standard classroom lecturing, when students are actively engaged they learn more, are better able to remember what they’ve learned, and their problem solving skills improve.

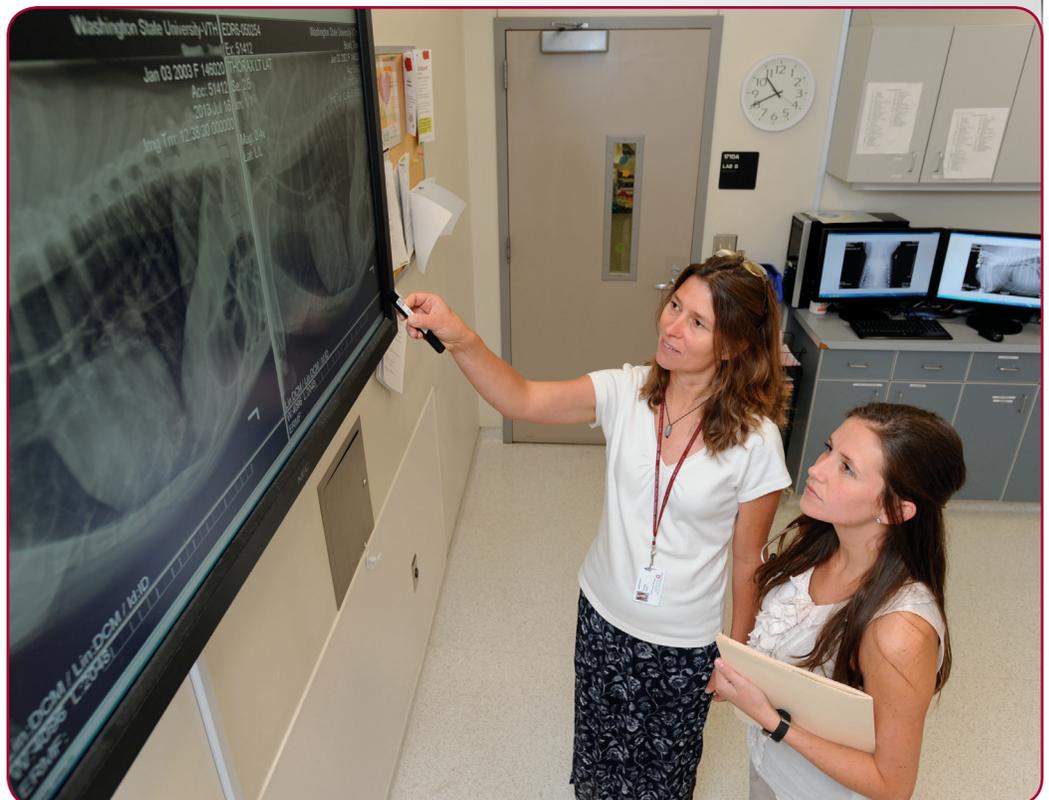
“From research we know there are better ways of teaching than hour after hour of lecture,” says

Steve Hines, associate dean for teaching and learning and director of the Teaching Academy. “When students are engaged the material is internalized, not just memorized.”

Known as scholarship-based teaching, faculty are trained in the best teaching practices to give students the best education. Through the Teaching Academy, faculty have the opportunity to attend workshops, informal “brown bag” seminars, and join

**“When we have better teachers, our students learn better. Our goal is to make students independent life-long learners.”**  
—Steve Hines, associate dean for teaching and learning and director of the Teaching Academy

Associate Professor Lynne Nelson (left) with Taylor Gwinn ('13 DVM), WSU intern.



the academy's book club. This summer alone, 46 people signed up for the book club to learn better ways to reach their students. And having a community helps to foster new ideas and gives instructors feedback about their teaching.

"The Teaching Academy has been essential to my transformation as an instructor," says Phil Mixter, a clinical associate professor in the School of Molecular Biosciences since 1995 and the 2012 recipient of the WSU Distinguished Teaching Award. "Having colleagues to bounce ideas off of and get feedback about what works well and what doesn't has been invaluable."

Besides training instructors to become better teachers, the Teaching Academy encourages faculty to practice academic scholarship to learn how these teaching methods improve education, recruitment, and student retention. Mixter, in collaboration with the WSU College of Education and the Teaching Academy, is developing a survey to identify students who are unsure of their future and may consider leaving WSU. Knowing this information could be used to revise curriculum and keep more students in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) programs.

"The Teaching Academy makes this kind of research possible," says Mixter, who plans to publish results that can then be used by instructors at other universities. "We can move to a model where we have some time-tested ways to evaluate teaching methods and elevate instruction in the college."

Ultimately, better trained instructors and tested methods of successful teaching will help our students be more successful. Having the skills to learn is more important than the knowledge base because things are always changing in medicine, explains Hines. If instructors can teach students what they need to know *and* teach them how to learn, then Hines believes they are best meeting the needs of the profession.

"When we have better teachers, our students learn better," said Hines. "Our goal is to make students independent life-long learners."

**To learn more about the Teaching Academy visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/TeachingAcademy](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/TeachingAcademy)**

## Active Studying: A Student Finds She Studies Less and Learns More

When Sami Barber ('15 DVM) took Dr. Steve Hines' systemic pathology class, the hands-on activities in lab and lecture were a new way of learning. And it was a bit of an adjustment.

"As an undergraduate I did a lot of passive learning," says Barber. "When you are used to something and have to switch it takes some getting used to."

In his class, Dr. Hines uses actual patient cases to teach critical thinking and problem solving-skills they will need when they begin their careers.

"Dr. Hines incorporates cases to solidify concepts and to get our brains to think like a doctor," says Barber.

He also encourages students to study actively outside of class, rather than just passively reading over their notes. Now, Sami often works in groups with her peers. They quiz each other, have conversations about topics, and ask questions. What she discovered was she learned the material more quickly and could remember it more easily. It also made learning a lot more fun.

"I've found it to be more enjoyable and efficient because I retain the information without going over it a lot," says Barber. "I actually spend less time studying and have better long-term retention. Learning this way has given me a more fulfilling and balanced life as a DVM student."



*Left to right: DVM ('15) students Sami Barber, Caitlin Antes, Siobhan Strom, Marion Fischer, and Jana Marquard (with Laika the dog) use active studying principles to more effectively learn the material. They work in peer groups,*

*quiz each other, have conversations about topics, and ask questions, which helps them retain the information more easily.*

## Western Regional Teaching Academy

This past summer 57 people from five colleges, including 11 from WSU, attended the 2013 Summer Conference hosted by the Teaching Academy of the Consortium of Western Region Colleges of Veterinary Medicine. The Regional Teaching Academy promotes faculty development, recognizes good teaching, encourages research in teaching to identify the best methods, and helps set regional standards that can be adopted by universities.

"We learn more from each other by presenting what we are doing in our schools," says Steve Hines, associate dean for teaching and learning and director of the WSU Teaching Academy.

The regional academy was created after the deans of five west region colleges of veterinary medicine, including Colorado State University, Oregon State University, the University of California-Davis, Washington State University, and Western University of Health Sciences, met in 2011 to discuss issues in veterinary medical and biomedical education.

"Because of the work WSU had done previously, we could start discussion with a relatively mature vision of a Teaching Academy," says Bryan Slinker, dean of the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. "This facilitated the selection of the Regional Teaching Academy as our first joint project and its subsequent development."



Lynne Haley,  
Director of Development

# From the Office of Development and External Relations

Our cover story in this issue highlights the impact the Teaching Academy has on the lives of our students and for our faculty. But many of these gains in academic excellence would not have been possible without the support of friends like alumnus Dr. Ken Jacobsen and his wife Lori.

As you'll read in the profile below, Dr. Jacobsen was so inspired by those who taught him at WSU that he wanted to give veterinary educators as much help as they needed to be able to continue the long tradition of exceptional

education. If our teachers are inspired, he says, they can inspire future generations of veterinary and graduate students.

In 2011, the Jacobsens gave \$90,000 to the Teaching Academy to support our educators. Their generosity, combined with the generosity of others, makes a real difference for the quality of our instruction and for our students' success. We are proud of what we can accomplish together.

Go Cougs!

**To learn more about the Teaching Academy or how you can support education at the college visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/TeachingAcademy](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/TeachingAcademy)**

## Supporter Profile: Ken and Lori Jacobsen

Ken Jacobsen ('77 BS, '82 DVM) knows the value of an excellent education. As a WSU graduate, he says his education was central to his success as a veterinarian and a businessman. So when he and his wife, Lori, had the opportunity to give back, a gift to the Teaching Academy was a natural fit.

"I was so inspired by my instructors that I wanted to help give teachers everything they need to excel," says Jacobsen, who's been a practicing veterinarian at the Redwood Animal Hospital in Redmond, Washington, since 1992. "I was close to many of my professors and they formed me as a practitioner."

When instructors and students work as a team

it can enhance the veterinary practice, explains Jacobsen. He believes this type of partnership can be fostered by helping our faculty become even better teachers.

"We can no longer train veterinarians the way I was trained," said Jacobsen. "Because of the high cost of education we have to train them faster. And we have to train them better."

**"I owe everything to the  
WSU Veterinary College."  
—Dr. Ken Jacobsen**



*Dr. Ken Jacobsen with Lori, his wife of 25 years, and their dog Lucy.*

# Awards and Achievements



## Founders Award

Vicki Croft, head of the Animal Health Library, received the Founders Award from the International Conference of Animal Health Information Specialists. Part of the One Health Initiative, ICAHIS is a forum for colleagues to discuss, share, and promote animal health

information access. Croft, an ICAHIS founder, has served on five of the seven conference planning committees and has cochaired two. She has also coauthored 11 papers for six of the conferences and presented posters at three.

## Your Gifts in Action

### Donor Gifts Help Purchase a Needed Ophthalmology Table

Small gifts can add up to make a big difference. Several years ago, Dr. Terri Alessio, WSU veterinary ophthalmology specialist, received a new height-adjustable examination table that has helped hundreds of her patients that she can now easily bring to eye level.

"It really helps for patient comfort," said Dr. Alessio. "We can adjust the table to where the animal feels most comfortable."

Before the ophthalmology group received the height-adjustable table, geriatric patients had to be lifted onto the table. Now the table can be lowered so that older patients can step on and then it is raised to just the right height. It can also be raised for smaller dogs and cats or lowered for big dogs.

"If a large dog feels like standing, the table can be lowered rather than asking the dog to lie down," said Dr. Alessio.

Donations from many friends of the college made this purchase possible.

"When people make general donations to the college, we put the money in a fund that can be used for just these types of



*Dr. Terri Alessio, WSU veterinary ophthalmology specialist (right), with Marie Crossley, LVT, and Daisy.*

needs," said Lynne Haley, director of development for the college. "People sometimes think a small gift doesn't do much, but those gifts add up and can have a big impact."

When she can, Dr. Alessio takes the height-adjustable table to the surgery room with her. But she hopes to someday have a second table.

"Our patients are more comfortable and relaxed," said Dr. Alessio. "It has made an incredible difference."

*To learn more about how your gift can make a difference please visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/GiftsinAction](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/GiftsinAction).*



Look for Gatherings of WSU Alumni, Friends, and Students  
at these Upcoming Events!

## Mark your calendars

### Dates to remember:

- December 9** Alumni Reception at the American Association of Equine Practitioners Conference in Nashville, Tennessee
- February 17** Alumni reception at the Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada
- April 12** College of Veterinary Medicine Open House in Pullman
- June 21** Peter Zornes Memorial Golf Tournament in Colfax, Washington
- June 27–28** DVM Class reunions ('74, '84, '94) in Pullman
- July 28** Alumni reception at AVMA in Denver, Colorado

*CE courses at WSU and online are offered year round; visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/CE](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/CE) for more information.*

*For more information about upcoming events visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Events](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Events).*

