

# Veterinary

# Teaching

# Hospital



## Veterinary *executive report*

Spring/Summer 2012

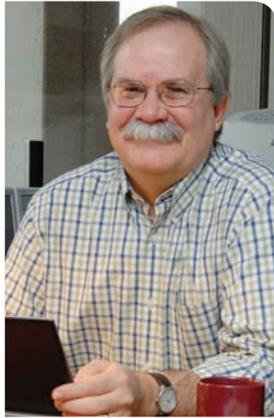


*Left to right:*  
Lori Lutskas, LVT,  
Physical Rehabilitation;  
Dr. Tammy Grubb,  
Pain Management;  
Dr. Mushtaq Memon,  
Acupuncture

## WSU's Veterinary Patient Wellness Service

### How We Care for Your Animal

# Message from the Dean



Dean Bryan Slinker  
WSU College of Veterinary Medicine

## **Veterinary Executive Report** WSU College of Veterinary Medicine

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We think, and we hope you agree, that we educate great veterinarians. But we strive to do even better and improve on our already strong program. For instance, when we survey exiting fourth year students, recent graduates, and employers of our graduates we consistently hear that our graduates “lack confidence” or that their “surgical skills could be better.” Coincidentally, there is an ongoing national discussion about how to improve the “career readiness” of DVM graduates. Career readiness can mean many things, but confidence and good surgical skills are surely a part.

So, what to do? Practicing veterinarians who devote their time and talents to our students as communication coaches, preceptors, or facilitators in Diagnostic Challenges contribute greatly to career readiness. In addition, however, access to a higher volume of general veterinary caseload where students can receive structured, repeated exposure to common medical and surgical problems also increases confidence and surgical skills. But our rural location limits the number of cases we see. Some students may only spay or neuter four to six cases during their time at WSU.

So we must consider taking the students to the cases. Does this mean we would abandon our Veterinary Teaching Hospital as the centerpiece of our education program? Not at all. It does mean, however, that in addition to core experiences in Pullman, DVM students increasingly need exposure to caseload elsewhere.

In the coming months and years we will expand preceptorships across all general practice settings and add specialized programs such as the Northwest Bovine Experience Program for beef- and dairy-oriented students. However, the most readily available large general caseload that can offer a highly structured enhanced general practice (surgery and medicine) experience is in large metropolitan shelters.

A large shelter partner provides many thousands of spay and neuter cases per year, and similar numbers of routine (i.e., general) medical and surgical cases. By basing a faculty member at the shelter to work closely with our students, we can divert a substantial portion of their high volume of shelter-owned cases to educational purposes, and directly control the student experience.

That said, the level of case exposure we seek for all of our students at a shelter is not possible unless they enlarge their clinical facilities. Thus, the right partner is one we can work with to renovate or rebuild their facilities to accommodate up to four students, a faculty member, and the veterinary technicians to support them, yet still allow the shelter staff to keep up with their caseload. The Seattle Humane Society in Bellevue and the Idaho Humane Society in Boise are two such partners in our region: we get access to the caseload we need to improve our DVM education program and the shelter engages in broader public service by helping us educate veterinarians. Fifty or a hundred spays and neuters per student—compared to four or six they do now—will greatly increase surgical experience and confidence. So will repetitive exposure to common medical conditions that we could not otherwise provide—dermatitis, upper respiratory disease, lacerations, urinary tract infections—you name it. These are great outcomes, and why we see these shelters as important partners to help us improve an already excellent DVM graduate.

And, as always, Go Cougs!

Dr. Bryan Slinker, Dean  
WSU College of Veterinary Medicine



## Bald Eagle Released After Treatment for Lead Poisoning

A five-year-old bald eagle was brought to the WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital in January after he was found in a ditch near Orofino, Idaho. After determining that the eagle showed signs of severe lead poisoning, Dr. Nickol Finch, head of the exotic and wildlife unit, gave him intravenous fluids and chelation therapy, which binds the lead so it can be eliminated through the kidneys.

Birds can get lead poisoning from ingesting shotgun pellets and bullet fragments in animal carcasses. Because bald eagles are scavengers, they are more likely to be exposed to lead through food.

“He’s one of the lucky ones,” said Finch, who, a few days before, was unable to save a golden eagle brought in with lead poisoning. Dr. Finch named the bird “Sauder,” after the Idaho fish and game biologist who rescued him.

If you find an injured raptor, seek help from a local wildlife agent or veterinarian, or call the WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital at 509-335-0711. To learn more about raptors at WSU, visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Raptors](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Raptors).



*Sauder, a five-year-old bald eagle, was released on March 12, 2012, after being treated for lead poisoning. Dr. Nickol Finch (left), head of the exotic and wildlife unit, and Alexis Adams (right), veterinary technician.*

# WSU's Veterinary Patient Wellness Service

## How We Care for Your Animal

Who says cookies can't be good for you? When Lori Lutskas goes to work each day, she carries a bag of cookies with her to encourage her patients to do their exercises.

"We do cookie stretches," said Lutskas, a licensed veterinary technician and WSU's veterinary physical rehabilitation practitioner. She puts a cookie (aka a healthy dog treat) on a dog's hip so the dog will stretch around to get it. "We try to make it fun."

One of her patients, a six-year-old dachshund named Dexter, was referred to WSU by his local veterinarian after he stopped using his hind legs and began dragging them as he walked with his front legs. Dexter was having back pain and an MRI revealed one of his discs was pressing on his spinal cord, causing the paralysis in his hind legs, a fairly common condition in dachshunds.

After surgery on his spine, Lori began physical rehabilitation with Dexter using a therapeutic underwater treadmill to help him regain use of his muscles. Because he could not yet move his legs for himself, she "walked" his hind legs to mimic normal walking.

After just one week, he began taking steps on his own. By day 11 he was walking with occasional use of a sling for assistance.

"Neurology patients are some of the most rewarding," said Lutskas. "When you have a patient that can't walk and then through treatment they can, it is very gratifying. If the animal was paralyzed then seeing even two steps is remarkable."

Dexter ended up staying at the WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital for two weeks since he was also part of a study evaluating the advantages of underwater treadmill therapy. Preliminary findings in the ongoing study are that animals begin walking sooner and recover more quickly when hydrotherapy is added to their treatment plan.

After two follow-up visits, Dexter is doing well and only having occasional stumbling or missteps. Not all patients regain the ability to walk, Lori explains, and for those patients a wheel chair can be a good option.

But physical rehabilitation isn't just for surgery or neurology patients. Clients can also be referred to WSU to help with other conditions such as osteoarthritis or obesity.

"Hydrotherapy can make a difference for geriatric patients who have osteoarthritis," said Lutskas. Because animals can use their limbs without bearing full weight in the underwater treadmill, their muscles can strengthen faster and joints can move with less pain.

Clients whose animals have received chemotherapy say that hydrotherapy improves the mood of their animals. According to Dr. Stephanie Thomovsky, WSU clinical assistant professor of neurology, after cancer patients receive treatment in the underwater treadmill they seem less depressed, eat better, and appear to feel better.

"For cancer patients who may have a brain tumor or restrictive activities, hydrotherapy is low impact and provides mental stimulus," said Dr. Thomovsky. Dr. Thomovsky is also currently working to become a certified rehabilitation practitioner and will help oversee the new Patient Wellness Services unit, which is expected to be formed in the fall of 2012.

"The vision is to provide integrated wellness service that would offer physical rehabilitation, pain management, and complementary therapies

like acupuncture," said Dr. Bill Dernell, chair of the Veterinary Clinical Sciences department.

Wellness services can help make recovery smoother for patients and ease other conditions like osteoarthritis or pain management for older animals. Acupuncture after ortho-

**"When you have a patient that can't walk and then through treatment they can, it is very gratifying."**

**—Lori Lutskas, WSU veterinary physical rehabilitation practitioner**

*Lori Lutskas, WSU's veterinary physical rehabilitation practitioner, working with one of her patients in the underwater treadmill.*



pedic surgery or neurosurgery may, for example, ease a patient's pain. It has also been shown to help animals with osteoarthritis and chemotherapy patients.

"Complementary therapies can make the healing process quicker and improve an animal's quality of life," said Dr. Mushtaq A. Memon, associate professor certified in acupuncture medicine. "Acupuncture, for example, can complement what we are already doing with traditional therapies."

While a team approach in pain centers is common in human medicine, it is progressive in animal medicine and WSU is one of the places leading the way. At the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, just like in human medicine, every animal patient must have a pain assessment to get a better sense of where an animal is feeling pain and how the treatment is working.

"With pain management, everyone can bring something to the table and take a team approach." Dr. Steve Greene, professor and anesthesiologist. "It is the way veterinary medicine is headed."

And WSU is also training its veterinary students in patient wellness services. The college offers a complementary and alternative medicine course including acupuncture, massage, and chiropractic care. The pain management course addresses topics such as chronic pain, rehabilitative therapies, and ethics of pain management.



*WSU veterinary student Emiko Namatame ('12 DVM) inserting needles at acupoints. Students can learn about acupuncture and other complementary therapies as part of the WSU curriculum.*

"Our pain management course is really pioneering," said Dr. Tammy Grubb, clinical assistant professor and anesthesiologist. "It is a semester long class, which is more than is offered at many other veterinary schools in the country."

As pets are living longer, chronic pain is something veterinarians see more of, said Dr. Grubb. By taking a team approach, issues like chronic pain can be addressed through physical rehabilitation, complementary therapies, or other pain management techniques.

"As our services expand, we also hope to offer other complementary therapies such as chiropractic care and massage to our patients," said Dr. Dernell. "As with all our service units at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, we will offer the best evidence-based wellness patient care using the latest technologies. And we will continue to offer the best wellness training to our veterinary students."

To learn more about wellness services offered at the WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Wellness](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Wellness).

Neurologists in the college are currently comparing the benefits of adding hydrotherapy to standard physical rehabilitation after surgery.

**To learn more about the neurology service at WSU, visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Neurology](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Neurology).**



Lynne Haley,  
director of development

# From the Office of Development and External Relations

When most people think of veterinary care, balance balls and underwater treadmills don't often come to mind. But as you read in our cover story, physical rehabilitation is one of the key services we offer to our patients to help them feel better faster.

We are able to provide quality physical rehabilitation services in large part because of generous donations to our physical rehabilitation unit. Our underwater treadmill, for example, was donated to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital in 2007 by two friends of the college. That same year, Chocolate, a stray Chesapeake Bay retriever, was brought to WSU to receive surgery on his injured front legs. He began physical rehabilitation in the underwater treadmill, allowing him to use his front limbs without bearing his full weight. Because of this gift, Chocolate was able to start rehabilitation sooner. It helped speed his recovery by strengthening his muscles with less pain. Since then, the underwater treadmill has helped many animals feel better.

In 2008 a friend of the college gave a therapeutic ultrasound machine that uses high-frequency sound waves, or ultrasound, to heat deep tissue and promote healing. The ultrasound unit also has electrical stimulation capabilities: neuromuscular stimulation, a passive exercise that strengthens weakened muscles due to injury and reduces muscle atrophy; and transcutaneous electrical stimulation, or TENS, that helps relieve acute and chronic pain in canine patients. Although active exercises are best, if it is too painful, adding passive exercises and TENS to the treatment plan helps the animal feel more comfortable by strengthening weakened muscles and relieving pain.

Gifts like these help us to provide the latest treatments to our patients and continue to offer the highest quality of care. Even smaller gifts such as physio balls, balance

boards, or bands given by generous friends makes a big difference to our physical rehab patients. Thanks for helping us help the animals you love!

If you'd like to learn more about our Patient Wellness Service and the other care options we offer visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Wellness](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Wellness).

*Chocolate, a stray Chesapeake Bay retriever, had surgery on his injured front legs. The therapeutic underwater treadmill allows animals to use their limbs without bearing full weight, which speeds recovery.*



## Congratulations to the 2011 Jerry Newbrey Teaching Scholars!

The Newbrey Teaching Scholar is awarded for excellence in teaching during the first three years of the veterinary core curriculum. This award is given in memory of Jerry Newbrey, who joined the VCAPP faculty in 1975, and who died too young in a climbing accident in 1990. Jerry was an exceptional teacher and student advocate. Those who receive this award richly deserve our appreciation for their commitment to our students and to excellence in the classroom.

- |                  |                       |                     |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Jeffrey Bryan    | Charles Leathers      | Leslie Sprunger     |
| Annie Chen       | John Mattoon          | Patricia Talcott    |
| William Foreyt   | Steven Parish         | Stephanie Thomovsky |
| Steve Hines      | Christopher Schneider | Ahmed Tibary        |
| Sunshine Lahmers | Deb Sellon            | Russ Tucker         |

### Calling all DVM alumni!

Remember your Diagnostic Challenge? Well, now DC needs you. Become a facilitator and help train a new generation of veterinarians. No time? Consider a gift to this exceptional program.

Visit [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/DC](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/DC) for more information.

# Awards and Achievements



**Phil Mixer,** clinical associate professor in the School of Molecular Biosciences, has received a 2012 WSU Distinguished Teaching Award. The award recognizes WSU faculty and students for their outstanding achievements and contributions to undergraduate education.



**Sue Ritter,** professor in veterinary and comparative anatomy, pharmacology, and physiology, has been promoted to Regents professor. The promotion honors the highest level of international distinction in the discipline that raises university standards through teaching, scholarship, and public service. Ritter's research contributes to an understanding of obesity, diabetes, and complications of insulin therapy in diabetics.

## Your Gifts in Action

### WSU Alumna Helps Veterinary Students Practice Abroad

Performing surgery by the light of cell phones would be unthinkable to most people, but that was just part of the experience of an externship in Malaysia for Felicia Lew ('12 DVM), a recent Susan Bradish Travel Grant recipient.

During Lew's externship, she and the rest of a surgical team were preparing a pet chicken for surgery. Just as they were about to insert a breathing tube, the power went out. Quickly the team had to improvise.

"Everyone was a little stunned at first, but then they just kept working," Lew said. "Everyone had a cell phone on them, so we all whipped out our phones and tried to light the airway enough to put the tube in."

Lew said that no one panicked, but she isn't sure what they would have done if the power did not come back after about ten minutes. During her externship, Lew worked in very different veterinary conditions, but she said that the experience was extremely valuable.

"International externships give students opportunities to gain experience when they wouldn't otherwise," Lew said. "It exposes them to other cultures, and makes them adapt to new situations."

She explained that one major difference is that many diagnoses in the United States are made by using a simple blood test, but that is not available to many people in Malaysia. Instead, they often treat animals without a definitive diagnosis.

"A lot of clients can't afford testing, so many diagnoses came from guessing based on symptoms," Lew said. "It was good to work with them to see how they work with less."

Lew said that the travel grant made this externship possible because it helped with travel expenses.



*Felicia Lew '12 in Malaysia*

The Susan Bradish Travel Grant is awarded to WSU veterinary students who are interested in gaining veterinary experience abroad, preferably in developing countries. It assists students with \$1,000 for externships that are at least three weeks long and include on-site veterinary work. Students must also be active members of the WSU International Veterinary Student Association. Lew was the IVSA president for the 2010-2011 school year.

Susan Bradish ('97 DVM), a veterinarian in Nicholasville, Kentucky, started this grant to help students gain an understanding of the daily challenges people face in most of the world. Bradish herself spent four weeks in India during veterinary school. She found that the culture was wonderful, but realized how fewer resources can affect the daily lives of people. Because she wants more students to gain this type of international experience, she assists them with their expenses by offering this grant.

*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 a WSU Alumni, Friends, and Students Gathering  
at these Upcoming Events!

## Mark your calendars

### Peter A. Zornes Memorial Golf Tournament

The 5th annual Peter A. Zornes Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on Saturday, June 23, 2012, at the Colfax Golf Club to benefit the Peter A. Zornes Memorial Neuroscience Scholarship at Washington State University. Register at [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Zornes](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/Zornes) or contact Lynne Haley at [lhaley@vetmed.wsu.edu](mailto:lhaley@vetmed.wsu.edu) or 509-335-5021. Remember to invite your friends to play!

### Other important dates to remember

- June 23** Peter Zornes Memorial Golf Tournament in Colfax, Washington
- August 6** Alumni reception at AVMA in San Diego, California (look for us at Harbor House)
- August 21** Bill Johnson's 7th Annual Bicycle Ride for WSU from Cle Elem, Washington, to Pullman
- September 8** Dedication of the Paul G. Allen Center for Global Animal Health in Pullman
- September 14-15** DVM Class of 1962 Reunion in Pullman
- September 21-23** DVM Class reunions ('72, '82, '92, '02) in Pullman
- September 22** CVM Homecoming BBQ (vs. Colorado) in Pullman
- September 29** WSU sponsored reception at the WSVMA in Yakima, Washington

*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).*

