

SPRING 2020

ROSS



Alumni Magazine



THE WELLNESS ISSUE

IT'S TIME TO THRIVE



ROSS

Alumni Magazine



WELCOME MESSAGE FROM MOLLY McALLISTER



Dear Ross Vet Alumni,

A lot has changed since I walked across the stage in 2004 to accept my diploma at the Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Looking back at our profession over the past few decades, I am thrilled of the progress we have made, particularly around supporting the wellbeing of veterinary professionals. It is now widely recognized as a key foundation to our health and sustainability, and we are seeing a concerted focus on this topic in our academic institutions, workplaces, and daily interactions with one another and members of our veterinary teams.

I have been especially impressed by the Ross approach to supporting veterinary students in their career journey, embracing the value of diversity and inclusion as a critical building block for our future, and applaud your efforts to provide tools and resources to support health and wellbeing throughout the path of student to tenured alum. I see parallels between Ross and Banfield Pet Hospital in our shared effort to support our people through creating a culture of holistic health and wellbeing through programs, tools, benefits and services that get to the root of industry pain points, such as high rates of student debt and mental health issues.

The future is uncharted. Uncharted can mean uncertain, and it can also mean that an exciting adventure or journey awaits. Upon entering this profession, we begin an incredible journey full of amazing possibilities. To seize upon those opportunities, it is important that we start with a strong foundation of resilience and empowerment. Resilience being our ability to manage through change, stress and turmoil. Empowerment being the knowledge that we control our own lives and can influence where the journey takes us. Together, these foundational elements can help us thrive despite challenges.

Now, more than ever, veterinarians play a critical role in supporting public health through veterinary care. As we navigate the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can be stronger together when we prioritize our health and wellbeing and support one another so that we can safely continue to offer high-quality, compassionate care to pets that rely on us.

I hope you find some useful knowledge and tools in this issue that help you promote the health and wellbeing of yourself and veterinary team.

Be well,

Molly McAllister, DVM, MPH
Chief Medical Officer
Senior Vice President, Veterinary Affairs



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SPRING 2020

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BE A ROSS VET ALUMNI AMBASSADOR

Do you have some free time to give to your alma mater? Would you like to share the value of your education with prospective students and their families? Are you looking for a meaningful way to volunteer? Become a Ross Vet Alumni Ambassador today!



Alumni activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- White Coat Ceremony Speaker
- Enrollment Webinar
- Prospective Student Outreach
- Speaker at College Fairs
- Profile in Marketing Material
- Alumni Association Council Member
- Scholarship Donation
- WIVC Speaker
- And much, much more...



If you are interested in the Alumni Ambassador program and would like more information, please email us at rusvmalumni@rossu.edu.

JOB POSTINGS



LOOKING TO FILL INTERNSHIPS OR FULL-TIME/PART-TIME POSITIONS AT YOUR PRACTICE?



Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine is happy to work to build relationships between your organization and Ross Vet alumni. Listing your openings with Ross Vet can provide you with increased exposure to quality practitioners from a variety of specialties. Support the Ross Vet community of alumni and enhance your organization by recruiting and hiring fellow Rossies. Please email RUSVMemployers@rossvet.edu.kn.

FINDING YOUR BALANCE



By Drs. Bennett and April Deddens

FINDING RELIEF FROM THE STRESSORS

inherent to the veterinary profession is essential for both our physical and mental well-being. We are sharing tips and strategies for striking a balance between our professional lives, raising a family, and nurturing personal wellness. Everyone is different and what works for us may not be the thing for you. However, in writing this we've identified a few useful ways you could add balance and wellness into your own life.

SETTING GOALS:

As veterinarians, one trait we all share is the ability to accomplish goals and complete seemingly insurmountable tasks, as evidenced by the immense drive each of us has demonstrated while earning a veterinary degree. We have both found it beneficial to direct our inherent drive into other areas of our lives by setting personal goals for ourselves.

Bennett: *I've always pretty much despised exercising for the sake of exercising. With trail running, I've managed to eke out some enjoyment from an activity that has the added benefit of keeping me healthy and somewhat fit. I'm not looking to break any records, but organized trail races offer me an opportunity to explore new beautiful, natural environments, and keeping a few on the calendar helps keep me active.*

April: *Running has always been a part of my life. I see running as a way to zone out and clear my head, and for that reason running trails hasn't been my thing. Constantly dodging rocks and roots has a way of spoiling the Zen that I'm looking for in a long run. Either way, we try to sign up for a few races together and look forward to those rare occasions when two working parents get to spend a few miles together.*

CHANNELING YOUR INNER NERD:

Let's face it, we're all a bunch of nerds. As cool as we may have felt kicking back on "the strip", wearing sick aviators, and tipping back Stags, when we went home at night we still had to memorize the mechanism of action of lidocaine and which species have a bulbourethral gland. Practicing as a veterinarian requires a lifetime of learning; however, directing that thirst for knowledge into something else you enjoy may help boost your mental well-being.

Bennett: *For me, learning everything there is to know about climbing has become my biggest passion outside of raising a family and working. I used to rock climb with my dad as a kid, and a little bit here and there over the years, but only recently did I allow it to become the center of my recreational universe. I've amassed a library of climbing manuals and guidebooks to rival our library of veterinary texts in hopes of learning every little bit of climbing lore there is to know. In the same way that Continuing Education helps us continue to practice good medicine, the benefits (of throwing myself into my climbing books) are being a safer climber and providing me the confidence to share my passion with friends and family. Climbing, hiking, and camping are also a way to get our daughter outside in nature away from the incessant glow of YouTube and just nerd out in the woods as a family.*

GETTING BACK TO YOUR ROOTS:

Most of us got into this profession because of our desire to help animals. Often, we are unable to provide the kind of help we had envisioned due to forces outside of our own resources and abilities. There are endless ways to rekindle that spark for animal welfare while helping your own community and others in need.

April: *Since I was little, I was always trying to save baby frogs from lawnmowers and bottle feed baby opossums. This has transcended my passion for volunteering to help provide veterinary care where it is needed most. Because of this, I volunteer yearly with World Vets providing free veterinary care to some of the most impoverished countries of the world. Not only does this allow me to feel like I'm really making a difference, but it also allows me to pursue travel, one of my other passions. I have been fortunate to travel all over Central America, South America, Asia, and soon will be volunteering in Tanzania, Africa. I also volunteer with a local rescue providing free spay and neuter for stray cats. Recently I became very involved with a farm animal sanctuary where I not only get to learn about husbandry but have also been able to treat a variety of species, as well as learn how to do surgeries that I have never done before.*

Practicing as a veterinarian can be a very rewarding experience but not without taking its toll. We're all goal-achieving, knowledge-craving, compassionate people, or else we wouldn't have become veterinarians in the first place. Leveraging those qualities into nurturing wellness in our daily lives is an effective way of dealing with the strains of our profession. ■

Drs. Bennett '15 and April Deddens '13 are Veterinarians in North Carolina. They are married and have one daughter.



HUMANIZING the EUTHANASIA EXPERIENCE

by Dr. Jocelyn Anne Mason



Here are some tips to help improve the euthanasia process in your clinic or mobile practice:

TIP 1

Prepare your clients. A large percentage of complaints to veterinary medical boards are related to euthanasia, mainly due to a lack of client preparation. Is it a client's first time experiencing a euthanasia? We can gently explain to them what the procedure will entail using terms that are gentle and less technical. Reminding those that have gone through the process before that every euthanasia is different, is also important. Even a slight twitch from the animal that the owner wasn't expecting can result in them leaving feeling distraught.

TIP 2

Prepare yourself. Use a **material check list*** to ensure you have everything you need in the room prior to the appt. Include extra doses of sedation, extra needles, etc. The last thing you want to do is to leave the room repeatedly during the procedure. A **client checklist*** is also beneficial. A list, containing questions that the staff could ask the family prior to the euthanasia, helps ensure everyone is on the same page.

TIP 3

Visit the crematorium your clinic uses. Families are still worried where their pets are going afterwards. It's important that you feel comfortable with whom you are recommending, so that you can relay this confidence to your clients.

TIP 4

Offer your clients grieving resources such as local **support groups or counselors.*** Even if not utilized, your concern and understanding of the pain they are experiencing will be apparent.

TIP 5

Try adapting your vocabulary in a more positive way. Instead of saying "He won't suffer," we can say "He will be more comfortable." Instead of "You are making the right decision," we can say "WE are making the right decision." Finally, instead of "16 years is a good age!" try, "They never live long enough."

With compassion fatigue and burnout running rampant and suicide at an all-time high in veterinary medicine, it is imperative that we start focusing on why we are headed in this direction and how we can change this trajectory.

As veterinarians, we share a very special reality. We are close witnesses to the extremely precious human-animal bond. However, we are often not as prepared as we could be to go through one of the toughest and trying times weighing in on that bond: **euthanasia**.

Aside from the cumulative stress factors we face professionally (high work expectations, long hours, tensions within our teams) and personally (family issues, health problems and financial stress...ahem, student loans), euthanasia can significantly contribute to deterioration of our mental health.

Even after performing thousands of euthanasias, there are still things we can all learn to ensure the entire process goes as smoothly as possible, leaving us feeling fulfilled rather than depressed or guilty.



Finally, ensuring that the pet's body is placed into a professional and respectful pet's body bag, like EUTHABAG, rather than a plastic trash bag, is very important to most families. Over 80% of pet owners surveyed in 2019 would pay to ensure their pet is taken care of after euthanasia.**

Simple actions like those described above can have a large impact on the clients experience, leaving both the veterinary staff feeling honored that they were able to provide this service to their clients and the families feeling supported.

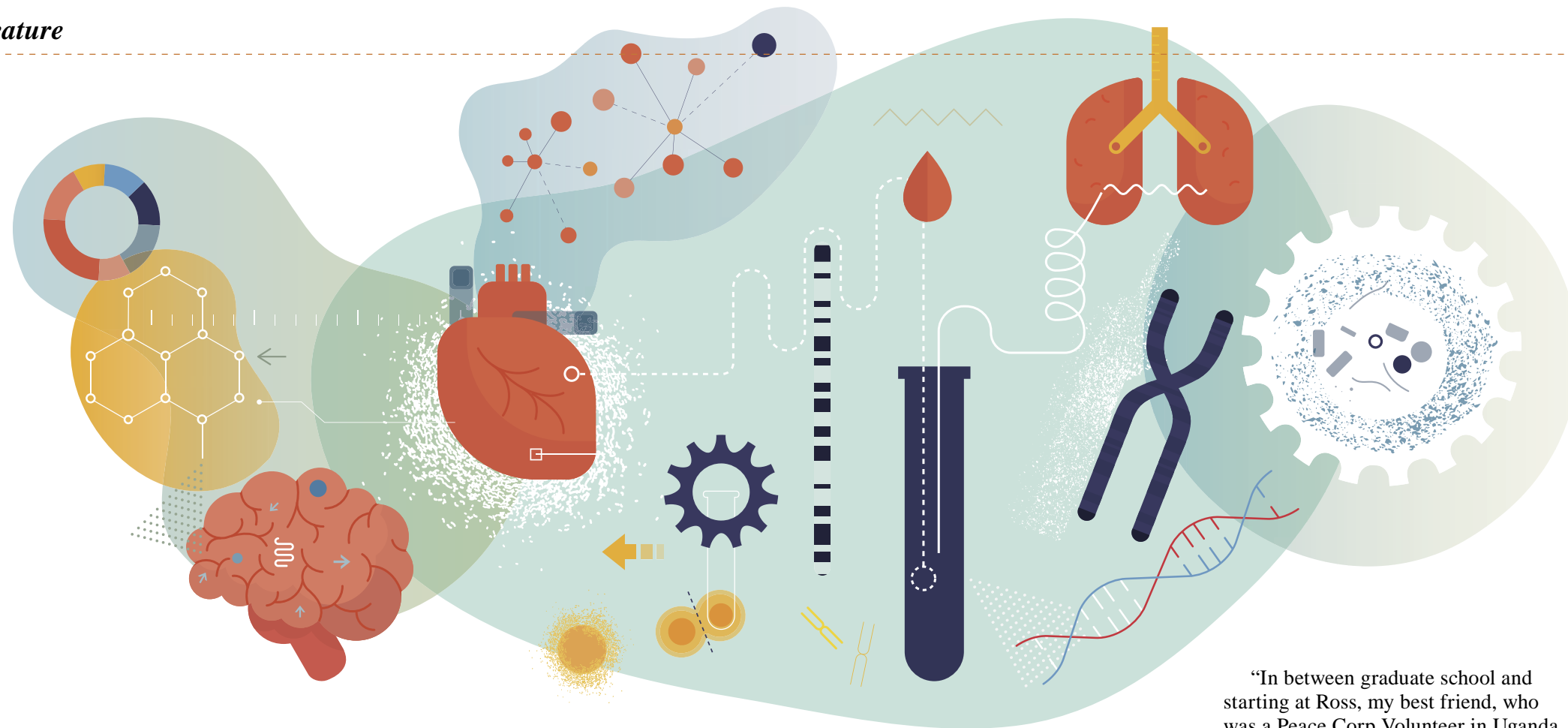
Lastly, if you are ever having feelings of depression, hopelessness, or are just having a difficult time in your life, please tell someone. Telling just one person can help you if/when it's needed. Once you've started down the path of depression, the odds of you reaching out for help decreases significantly, and that help may not arrive in time. ■



If you or someone you know may be contemplating suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, or text HOME to 741741 for the Crisis Text Line.

* visit euthabag.com (U.S.A) / euthabag.ca (Canada) to access these free *Tools For Your Practice*

** *The importance of how a pet's body is handled after death.* Survey of 100 American Pet Owners, July 2019



THE ONE HEALTH IMPACT

By Becky Holton

Rachel Vistein, PhD, DVM '18 is not your average Ross Vet alumni story. Dr. Vistein first pursued an undergraduate degree in biology, minoring in chemistry and getting her first research experience. She continued with her PhD, focusing on the cell biology at the basic science level. The work she was doing exposed her to a science department undertaking research across the spectrum from biochemistry to clinical trials, sparking further interest in pursuing research as a career. While entering the DVM program with a PhD may not be your typical educational path, it offers a distinctive point of view when it comes to research impacting public health.

"I got into science and biology with a very biochemistry focus, but over the course of grad school started to see a huge connection in the spectrum of research. At the same time, I had been volunteering at an animal shelter throughout the program. I know that I really enjoyed working with animals. So, I started looking at veterinary schools with the idea of doing laboratory animal medicine. I have this very keen research interest as well as a lot of consideration for animal welfare."

"In between graduate school and starting at Ross, my best friend, who was a Peace Corp Volunteer in Uganda, invited me to teach at a camp for teenage girls. It was fantastic. I wasn't just tucked away in a resort somewhere or a safari village. It was in a normal city, using public transit, and learning how differently people interacted with livestock and other domestic species, as well as interacting with wildlife. I also got to know the girls, who just, throughout their lives, were impacted by infectious diseases that you don't often see in the United States."

Due to both the experience of volunteering followed by the experience of being a Ross Vet student, Dr. Vistein gained an appreciation for vector-borne disease, particularly with mosquitos. She currently works as a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institutes of Health Vaccine Research Center.

"I'm on the team working on malaria, a vector-borne disease that currently has no effective vaccine. There has been one released, it doesn't have a long range of protection that you would like a vaccine to have that would make it better than taking available medications."



RACHEL VISTEIN, PHD, DVM '18

"With global warming and climate change, we're seeing shifts and distributions of vectors and therefore of parasites and diseases that can spread. As we are all more connected, it's something we're at an increased risk of. From that perspective, One Health is really bringing together the public health dynamic, traditional human doctors, as well as animal impact."

Part of doing research on vaccines and trying to engineer them is to analyze the immune response of individuals who have either been infected or have had vaccines that led to some level of protection. NIH is one of several groups that has begun to investigate using monoclonal antibodies derived from these individuals directly as preventive medicine.

"Our lab is trying to apply this to malaria. There are hundreds of thousands of clinical cases of malaria reported every year, and more that go unreported. And it's diminishing people's ability to work and take care of themselves. There are tens of thousands of deaths every year and most of those are small children. So, the idea is, if we get these monoclonal antibodies as a way to protect individuals, it's another tool in the toolbox to help eradicate malaria. You know, everybody has had a viral infection that they wish they didn't have to go through or have lost relatives or friends to disease. The research (I do) is a great way to get people interested in science because it so easily touches our lives. And I think it's inherently exciting when you hear about new ways that we're working on (overcoming or preventing diseases) to do just that."

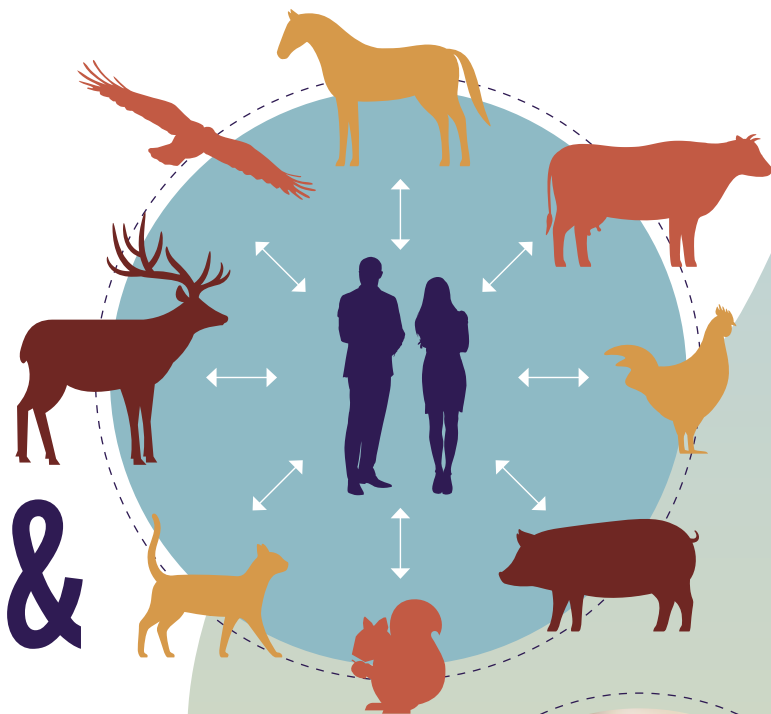
The world is changing, and people and places are more interconnected than ever, which means the potential risks for exposure increase. "I think clinical veterinarians are in a fantastic position to do public education. Sometimes it's the same person who is reticent to get their flu vaccine or is nervous about their human child being vaccinated, that would accept a rabies vaccination. Veterinarians are in a great position to educate, 'this is what vaccines do, and this is their impact'. I think people care about their animals so much that even though they're not engaged in primary clinical research, they can get excited about the science because it affects their pets. It's a slightly different route to share information and educate people."

"That really is part of the One Health initiative. How are we all different? And how does all the commentary come together to tell the same story? Well, you need the other voice to kind of balance out what the doctors are saying. It's research and then it's telling the story. Animals are a fantastic conduit to talk to people about the choice they are making. Because we invest so much care into our animals, (there's the belief) that the things that are good for our animals are good for ourselves." ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Vistein holds her bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida and PhD from Carnegie Mellon University. Dr. Vistein was recently matched with Johns Hopkins University and will begin a four-year lab animal/research residency this summer. Dr. Vistein's comments are personal opinions and do not necessarily reflect any stances NIH currently takes.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION & ZOOZOSES

By Becky Holton



SHERRYDON PRINGLE



It is estimated that zoonoses are responsible for 2.5 billion cases of human illness and 2.7 million human deaths worldwide each year. Six out of every ten infectious diseases in people are zoonotic, which makes it crucial that communities strengthen their capabilities to prevent and respond to these diseases. As infectious disease outbreaks such as the current coronavirus make headlines, it's often difficult to discern fact versus fiction. While many of these diseases can be deadly, like rabies, many others are not, but can still make you sick and can be severe in immunodepressed people.

Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine is committed to a One Health, transdisciplinary approach

to achieve optimal health outcomes, recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. Both the One Health Certificate program and the MSc in One Health develop the knowledge and skills for our students to work collaboratively across health and social science professions to prevent and treat animal diseases and help maintain the quality of our environment.

MSc One Health student **Sherrydon Pringle**, under the supervision of Ross Vet faculty Dr. Anne Conan, is completing research to assess the knowledge of zoonoses related to hygiene practices in DeKalb County, Atlanta, Georgia.

The risk that you or a loved one becomes infected is very much decreased if you use common sense,

practice good hygiene, and keep your pet healthy. “(The goal of my research) was trying to determine how frequently the topic of pets and diseases were discussed in households. The human-animal bond is increasingly growing. However, people’s awareness of pet-associated disease risks is overlooked.”

There is plenty of evidence to support the importance of public education in reducing the risk of infectious disease transmission between human and animals. However, where and how individuals are receiving educational information about it is less apparent.



“There isn’t a lot of available data about how the information is used to reduce the risk of transmission within pet-owning and non-pet owning households.”

The potential research findings from Pringle’s research underscores the importance of the One Health initiative. It reinforces the need for collaboration across the science fields to understand and manage the public health risks surrounding zoonotic diseases, and the importance of developing relevant policies, strategies, and sustainable programs that better educate the average person in prevention, risk reduction, and potential outbreak management. ■

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH ONE HEALTH

Ross Vet is pleased to announce new start terms for our One Health programs:

MSc in One Health

Fall (September) Term—Apply by July 1

Certificate in One Health

Spring (January) Term—Apply by Nov. 1

Summer (May) Term—Apply by March 1

Fall (September) Term—Apply by July 1

Turn your passion into impact with an MSc or Certificate in One Health, and earn continuing education (CE) credits as you go. Coursework is AAVSB RACE®-approved for CE credits in veterinary medicine.

Visit veterinary.rossu.edu/postgraduate to learn more about our One Health programs.



¹ www.cdc.gov/eid/article/23/13/17-0418_article

² www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/s0506-zoonotic-diseases-shared

PROTECTING, PROMOTING, AND ADVANCING WELLBEING



AVMA Wellbeing Resources

Explore AVMA's wellbeing tools and resources that empower veterinarians and all team members to prioritize self-care and make the short- and long-term investments needed for personal wellbeing. Learn how to manage stress in healthy ways, practice self-care, lend a hand to struggling peers, and more.



By Dr. Jennifer Brandt

“

From our wellbeing webpage on avma.org to our MyVeterinaryLife.com website, the AVMA has myriad resources to help both veterinarians and students nurture their wellbeing, and I encourage you to take a look. We are continuing to make progress in better understanding the issues facing our profession and how we can best help address them. The AVMA remains focused in our ongoing efforts to make the veterinary profession as strong, healthy, and inclusive as possible.”

DR. JOHN HOWE
AVMA PRESIDENT

Veterinary professionals make outstanding contributions to the profession and their communities every day, and that important work can potentially take a toll on our physical and mental wellbeing. That's why the AVMA is committed to offering a wide range of resources that help protect and maintain mental health. From easily-accessible online tools to guidance for specific veterinary demographics, the AVMA strives to support wellbeing across the entire profession.

Last fall, the AVMA hosted the 2019 Veterinary Wellbeing Summit, which convened practitioners, team members, students, educators, and mental health experts to highlight actionable strategies and tactics that foster inclusive academic and work environments and promote individual, team, practice, and organizational wellbeing.

At the time of the summit, a new toolkit was launched in collaboration with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the American Academy of Veterinary Medical Colleges

to help veterinary colleges support the emotional wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff in the aftermath of a student's death by suicide.

We also introduced the Workplace Wellbeing Certificate Program last year. The program can be found on AVMA Axon and provides participants the opportunity to earn up to four hours of CE credit. Its five modules provides veterinarians and veterinary teams the knowledge and skills to create a culture of wellbeing in their workplace.

In addition to these programs for veterinary teams, the AVMA has created resources specific to veterinary students, including dedicated tools on MyVeterinaryLife.com for navigating the challenges of veterinary school and post-graduation life. And, this year, graduating SAVMA students will receive the Out of the Crate (or Gate) booklet containing wellbeing information tailored for graduating students.

These initiatives support and complement the variety of other wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion resources provided by the AVMA. Wellbeing is crucial to the veterinary profession—and it's a key focus for the association representing the nation's veterinarians. ■

PERSONAL WELLBEING ASSESSMENT

Start your journey to improved wellbeing with the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) assessment. This test helps you measure your current balance of positive and negative personal and work-related experiences. Use the results as a starting point to create a self-care plan and pinpoint areas to incorporate health and wellbeing improvements into your life.

100 HEALTHY TIPS

Get 100 practical suggestions to support healthful living at work and at home. AVMA's guide offers steps for both individuals and organizations to take in nine dimensions of wellbeing.

CYBERBULLYING RESOURCES

Being bullied online has become a real cause for concern among veterinary professionals. Cyberbullying can be both emotionally distressing and disruptive to our lives and businesses. The AVMA has tools to help, including a 24/7 cyberbullying hotline, reputation management resources, and more.

 avma.org/Wellbeing

WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS

Learn how to build a more cohesive and collaborative staff unit while helping your team communicate more efficiently, overcome challenges, and grow together. AVMA has tools to strengthen your veterinary team, including the Workplace Wellbeing Certificate Program offered through AVMA Axon.

 avma.org/WorkplaceWellbeing

WELLBEING CE

AVMA Axon offers CE courses that focus on all aspects of wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion—interconnected areas that are crucial to health and success. Topics cover stress management, workplace culture, community support, team building, and more.

 avma.org/Axon

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) gatekeeper training has been provided by the AVMA since 2016 and is offered free of charge to AVMA and SAVMA members. It helps to heighten awareness and gives those without a mental health background the tools to identify and refer at-risk colleagues.

 avma.org/QPR

MY VETERINARY LIFE

AVMA launched MyVeterinaryLife.com to provide tools and resources that support students and early-career veterinarians, with an entire section dedicated to wellbeing. All of the information is organized based on career stage, so it's easy to find the most relevant content for your life. Be sure to check out the associated My Veterinary Life podcast, which focuses on personal stories from across the veterinary profession.

 MyVeterinaryLife.com

REACH OUT

Knowing when to reach out for help—and doing it—might be the most important part of your wellbeing plan. No one can do everything alone, and this is especially true where mental health is involved. If you believe that you're in crisis, please get help immediately by calling 1-800-273-8255 or contacting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's Crisis Chat team.

 SuicidePreventionLifeline.org



Remove this
spread and use
in good health!



10 TIPS to maintain your wellbeing

Your work is incredibly meaningful and sometimes it can be overwhelming. Here are our top 10 self-care hacks to ensure that you maintain your wellbeing!

TIP #1



Consider beginning a daily gratitude practice. Gratitude improves your psychological and physical health, and increases your self-esteem. Before you head in to your office/clinic, jot down what you are grateful for.

TIP #2



Identify a positive affirmation that you can repeat throughout the day. For example, 'I am deserving of the good things in my life!'

TIP #3



Unplug from social media or take a break from the news. The news cycle repeats worst-case-scenario stories that may increase your stress levels. Or better yet, take a break from technology all together.

TIP #4



Pet a friendly patient at work. There are great health benefits that stem from the human-animal bond.

TIP #5



Breathe in; breathe out! Practice 4-7-8 breathing: 4 seconds in through nose, 7 seconds hold, 8 seconds out through mouth. It helps to keep you calm!

TIP #6



Choose nutritious foods rather than foods high in processed sugar. Remember, 'eat like a rainbow' when you are shopping!

TIP #7



Stay hydrated! Give your body what it needs to support a healthy mind.

TIP #8



Stay connected with friends, family and neighbors. Talk to those who you are close to or with your personal therapist about your successes and challenges.

TIP #9



Monitor your emotions and moods daily by regularly checking in with yourself.

TIP #10



Develop a bedtime ritual for better sleep. Whether it's taking a bath or listening to calming meditations, a sleep ritual prepares your body to get a good night's rest.



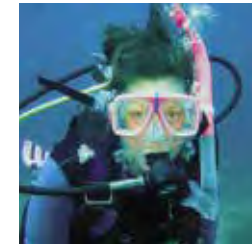
A Comprehensive Approach to Wellness

Here's the thing—a strong community cannot exist without healthy colleagues and students. That's why Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (RUSVM) decided to take a holistic approach to foster wellbeing on a community level.

The University launched Thrive—the RUSVM wellness program. This program covers emotional,

environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual wellness.

Why so many facets? Because wellness is much more than physical health. When you strive to improve these areas of your life, you will have better relationships, handle adversity more easily, and have a greater sense of purpose. Essentially, you will *thrive*!



EMOTIONAL



ENVIRONMENTAL



FINANCIAL



INTELLECTUAL



OCCUPATIONAL



PHYSICAL



SOCIAL



SPIRITUAL

VISION

To create a campus culture that encourages and supports healthy living.

MISSION

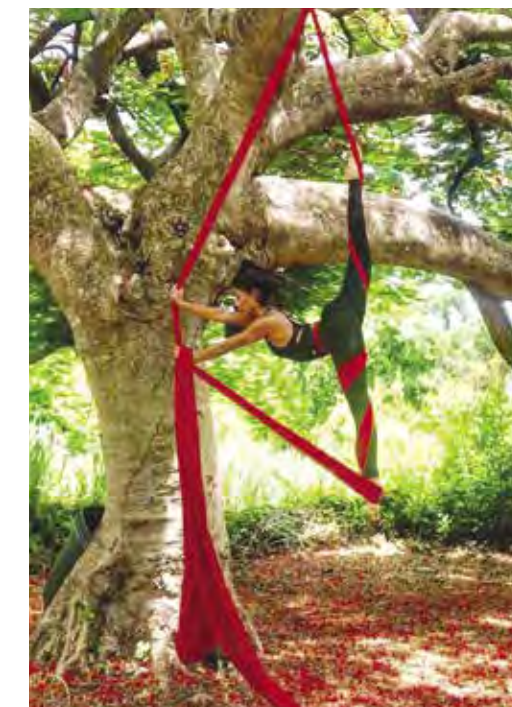
To promote the overall wellness of the Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine community in support of the institution's academic mission.

GOALS

- Encourage wellbeing;
- Educate the community on healthy lifestyles;
- Develop wellness activities and programs;
- Maximize campus outreach through collaboration.

VALUES

- The significance of total health—mind and body;
- The potential for growth of all individuals;
- The inherent worth of all people—deserving respect and dignity;
- The importance of collaboration and community.



WELLNESS IN ACTION

Dr. Jessica Taylor, THRIVE Affordable Vet Care



Self-care, wellness, and well-being are all phrases that have moved to the forefront of many discussions in veterinary medicine. Hearing them, they sound easy enough, and certainly something we all want to achieve, but what does this look like in every-day practice? How do veterinarians and veterinary staff achieve a level of awareness and harmony to sustain a healthy career and life outside of work? What are some values and actions that reflect these goals?

1. OPTIMISM Boarding a sinking ship is tough, even if only one person thinks it is going down. Infusing optimism into daily tasks encourages teamwork, problem solving, and reflection on what has been accomplished. Turning “this is broken and I can’t do my job” into “how can we work together to overcome this hurdle” can be the difference in a day of frustration and a day of celebrating teamwork. Words matter, so we choose words that are positive and encourage optimism.

2. GROWTH Providing the resources and opportunity to learn new skills, develop in one’s role, and contribute to teaching others can bond employees to their company and their coworkers. Setting an expectation that all members of the workforce can and need to grow helps deconstruct hierarchies and develop a healthy team.

3. RESPECT Honoring time off as truly time off, supporting and allowing for diverse needs for family time, and rewarding healthy habits and actions are ways that an employer shows respect for the employee. Conversely, being present and focused during scheduled work, offering feedback and new ideas, and honoring set expectations are ways that an employee respects their organization.

4. RESOURCES Companies and practices can work to partner with health services that provide Employee Assistance Programs for mental health support and choose plans that promote preventative care. The leadership of each team can help guide employees to these services when needed.

Who ensures the values are maintained? In small practices, it can start with the veterinarian, practice manager, or medical director. In larger organizations, the vision for the company may begin with an executive team and fan out by region and market, translated by many local leaders. However, leadership is not a title, but rather an action. If all members of the veterinary team can strive for these values, among many others, we can work toward having a healthy work environment that promotes wellness, both within the workday and beyond. ■



THRIVE AFFORDABLE
VET CARE



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Jessica Taylor serves as Regional Medical Director at THRIVE Affordable Vet Care, where she builds teams of compassionate veterinary professionals across the US. Want to join her team? See current career opportunities at www.thrivevet.com/careers

At THRIVE Affordable Vet Care, the vision for the company begins with our executive team and reaches our employees through the support and guidance of our local leadership. We view leadership not as a title, but rather an action. We work to guide our practices to embody our core values, among many others, and work toward having a healthy work environment that promotes wellness, both within the workday and beyond.

Learn more about THRIVE
at www.thrivevet.com

WELLNESS, WELLBEING, ...WIVC!

RUSVM IS A HUGE ADVOCATE OF WELLNESS AND WELLBEING as shown in this edition of the magazine. West Indies Veterinary Conference is no different and over the years, we have developed, based on your feedback, a program of CE complemented by wellness activities, both social and fitness. Fear not, the snorkeling catamaran trip to Nevis is very much part of that! But we have added yoga, including a new experience for 2020, meditation, running, reunions and social gatherings. Feedback from our attendees tells us this is important and adds a dimension to the conference which makes it unique, allowing mingling, making new friends and networking around a variety of activities, whatever your interests!

We all know how much self-care is crucial to our daily lives and veterinarians know it better than anyone. In these challenging times, we all have to come together to promote wellness and wellbeing so we cannot wait to show you what the conference has in store this year!



SAVE THE DATE

WIVC WEST INDIES
VETERINARY
CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 1-6, 2020

Mark your calendars for the 2020 West Indies Veterinary Conference on the beautiful island of St. Kitts—an expert program of continuing education for veterinary professionals and technicians.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW

TO LEARN MORE & REGISTER, VISIT:
veterinary.rossu.edu/WIVC2020



ROSS UNIVERSITY
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GET HELP

By Julie A. Cohen, DVM

Being faced with the loss of a dear friend and colleague, alumna Dr. Cohen started to create poetic pieces which can be resources for those who struggle. Here, she shares “Get Help”, a powerful expression of recognizing struggle and of the need to reach out. We know it will resonate with many.

It's been a long day
All you want to do is go to bed
But you can't
You're on call
And the phone is always fake ringing in your head

So you stay up late
Save some lives throughout the night
Just to start all over the next day
And you're up before it's light

Now your fire is gone
And you feel a little lost
You're not sure how to move on
You wonder, was it really worth all it cost?

Even the sun takes a rest
And just like us, it burns all day
But every evening the sun sets
And we, too, should learn to live our lives that way

And it has always been this way
We keep burning and burning
Until one particularly difficult day
We say “enough, I've burnt out” and we decide to do something

They talk about lending hands
And helping others around us
And that stuff is great, it really is
But we have to help ourselves,
before the others around us

So, just like on the plane
“help yourself before assisting
those around you”
Don't lose yourself or go insane
Getting your own help should
be the first thing you do
Listen to yourself

What do you need?
Do you need to get some help?
Or do you just need a little more sleep?

So you find a therapist
And talk about your demons
And you face your battles
And keep talking about your demons

And you keep on going and you persevere
You finally get the help you really needed in vet school first year

So now that's done
And even when it doesn't feel okay
You have the support to lean on
You still have the strength to move through those tough days

Look around you
There are others who felt or feel the same
And you may not know exactly what to do
But you could maybe start with saying:

Look at this life you've known
Look at how much you've grown
And I know you feel so prone
Like pain is all you've known
But you don't have to do this alone
You don't have to be on your own
Your therapy, friends, colleagues—WE ARE a judgement-free zone

We do go through a lot each day
Give yourself some credit for the lives you save

Some of us aren't sure how to live
Afterall, we end lives for a living
And people tell us it's a gift we are giving
And that is so exhausting
Vet med can be traumatizing

So we have to stand together
And we have to take care of each other

Listen to your colleagues
Be present for them
Don't let them be lonely in their melancholies
It's okay to ask them a direct question

Like “are you okay?”
Or tell them “I'm here with you.”
And sometimes all it takes
Is for you to say “I hear you”

I know there's a stigma
Getting help is not a bad thing
You are not a worthless enigma
You are not weak or nothing
Please take care of yourself
Keep up with your self-care
The AVMA, your employer—they can actually help
Don't wait until there's no more you can bare

So please don't leave
I've got a listening ear
Don't take yourself from this world, please
We all want you to stay here



#NEWBEGINNINGS



Newly appointed Medical Director, **Natalie Hoepp (RUSVM 2011), DVM, DACVP** has launched a new venture, Scpio Labs, a digital microscopy platform for hematology and cytology samples, providing access to rapid diagnostic tools not available before.



Dr. Luz Rodriguez (RUSVM 2020) joined Atlas Pet Clinic, Clermont, FL, in February 2020 as an associate veterinarian. The clinic is part of the American Veterinary Group where another 9 graduates (including Alumni Council member Dr. JP Carew) also work.



Dr. Frank Akawi (RUSVM 1999), Integrative Veterinary Medicine practitioner, has launched a new book: "Acupuncture Saved My Life". Published by Lulu.com, this new book covers the use of alternative medicine including acupuncture and herbs on dogs and cats to cure chronic and terminal diseases.



Dr. Lori Arrison-Mathews is a 2008 Ross graduate. She is practicing in Troy, OH, and opened Green Valley Veterinary Care in May 2019.



Dr. Caroline Leisz (RUSVM 2017) and her husband Alan are delighted to announce the arrival of lovely little Gwyneth (Gwinnie for short). Big sister Leanora, who spent the first 2 years of her life on St. Kitts, cannot wait to show Gwinnie where she grew up when the family returns to island for WIVC2020.



Charmel Rodick, DVM, a 2005 Ross Graduate and co-owner of Deer Park Animal Hospital, near Houston, TX. The practice had a grand opening of their newly relocated veterinary facility in May 2019. They will be recognized with one of the 2020 dvm360 Hospital Design Merit Awards. They currently have 7 total veterinarians employed, three of which are Ross Graduates.



Dr. Katie Behm (RUSVM 2020), who recently graduated and is the Student AVMA's past Economic Officer, has just made her first steps into the profession. Katie joined Scottsdale Veterinary Hospital in Vancouver, BC, in January 2020 as an associate veterinarian.



Dr. Nick Avis (RUSVM 2007) is pleased to announce the opening of his new hospital, Southern Wind Animal Hospital in Palm Coast, FL. The practice is a lifelong dream of Dr. Avis who, with his team, is also involved in local community events such as beach clean ups.



Dr. Nam Kyun Kim (RUSVM 2016) married Doyeon Ko, in October 2019, in South Korea where the couple is originally from. Dr. Kim and his wife live in the Chicago area where he is a small animal veterinarian.



Dr. Grace Gryncewicz married PJ Nastasi in Safety Harbor, FL, in February 2020. Once again, Rossies were there to help celebrate (and before that at her bachelorette cruise party).



Congratulations to **Dr. Jean Heppner (RUSVM 2014)** on her promotion to co-Chief of Staff at North Austin Animal Hospital and **Dr. Kat Judd (RUSVM 2012)** formerly a veterinarian at the North Austin, on her promotion to Chief of Staff at Rosedale Veterinary Clinic, also in Austin, TX, and under the regional leadership of **Dr. Chad Harris (RUSVM 2012)**.



Jennifer and Andrew Altvater (both RUSVM 2017) are delighted to announce the arrival of their daughter Olivia. Jennifer and Andrew practice in Florida where Andrew is from.



Alumni Ambassador **Dr. Alex Adler (RUSVM 2014)** was surrounded by Rossies when she tied the knot to her husband Sean McGrath in January 2020, in Orange County, NJ. The couple were engaged in St. Kitts in 2019 and recently returned to the island to attend WIVC2019.

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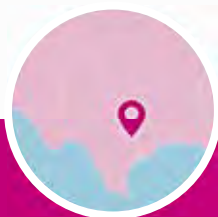
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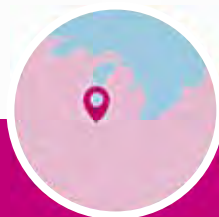
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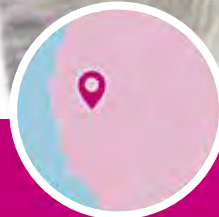
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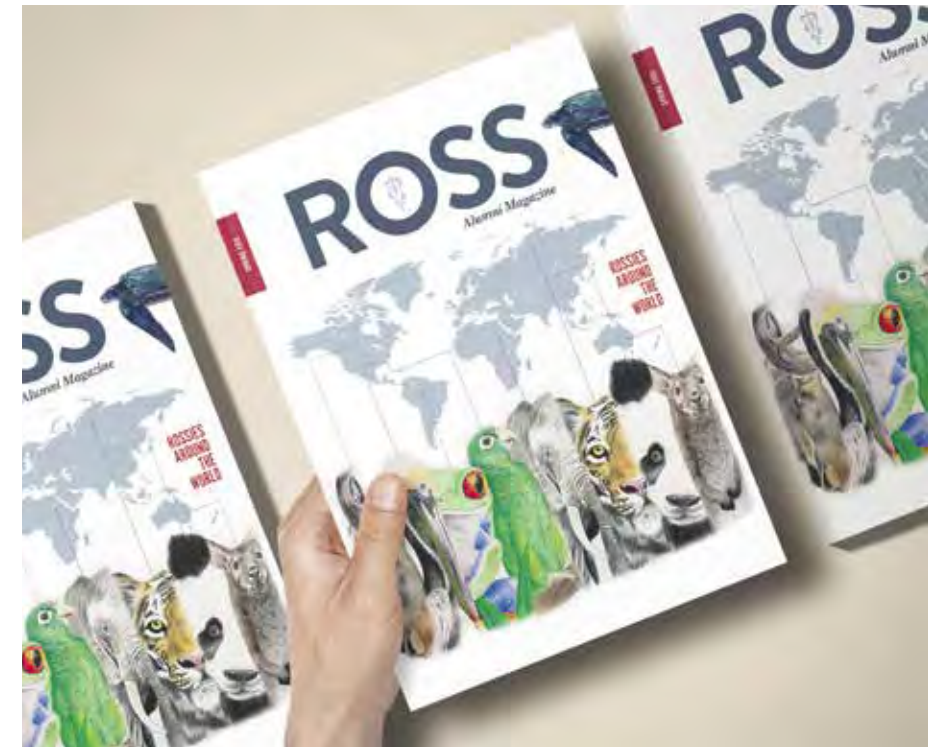
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We are so proud of all of our alumni

who continue to provide essential veterinary care to our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic and those who are directly involved through research, public health, and emergency responses. We also want to acknowledge those who have continued to provide education to aspiring veterinarians during these challenging times.

#CommitToCaring #WeAreRossVet



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