SAVMA ATTENDS INAUGURAL NABY CONFERENCE

WORLD TURTLE DAY

ALUMNI CORNER: DR. OTTO STANISLAW

2019 RUSVM GRADUATION

VOLUNTEERING WITH ELEPHANTS

EMILLIE DODD SEVENTH SEMESTER SPOTLIGHT

GRISWOLD

RUSVM ADDS MORE STUDY SPACE
Welcome to the Fall 2019 Semester at RUSVM. Like every other semester it is sure to be full of academic pressure, extracurricular learning opportunities and island fun. My name is Rob Gilbert and I have the privilege of serving RUSVM as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. In this role, I provide oversight and leadership for the academic program as a whole. I work with the Curriculum Committee to ensure that our course portfolio, content and sequencing are optimal to meet our goal of graduating the well-rounded, practice-ready veterinarians Rossies are known to be. The teams in the Library, Exam Center, Registrar’s office and Academic Technology are part of Academic Affairs and help provide an optimal learning and teaching environment. I also work closely with Dr. Fortune Sithole, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Professional Opportunities to support students in their clinical training at affiliate universities.

One measure of the success of our curriculum is the performance of our students in external exams, the most important of which is the NAVLE (the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination®), required for registration as a veterinarian in the USA and Canada, and taken by our students during the last year of their training. The pass rates for RUSVM students declined gradually from 2015 through 2018. I am pleased to report that the 2018-19 year has shown a strong improvement with 88% of RUSVM students passing the exam. We look forward to further improvement.

RUSVM students take another external exam, the Veterinary Educational Assessment, in their 5th semester. The VEA is administered by the International Council for Veterinary Assessment, which is an arm of the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME), and the same body responsible for NAVLE. This test measures knowledge in anatomy, physiology, microbiology, pathology and pharmacology. Its importance, apart from external benchmarking of our program, is that it is an excellent predictor of NAVLE performance, and therefore an opportunity for students to reassure themselves that they are on target for this stage of their studies. Other predictors of NAVLE performance are general academic performance (cumulative GPA after 7th semester), performance in the 7th semester Practice NAVLE exam, and participation in VetPrep®. No, not that VetPrep – here I am referring to a NAVLE preparation course provided to 7th semester students for a full 16 months, which means it extends until their graduation. The more students utilize this resource, the better they score in the NAVLE.

I welcome all forms of feedback. I meet regularly (aiming for twice each semester) with student leadership (SAVMA officers and Class reps) and encourage all students and others to reach out with concerns or suggestions. Feel free to email me at RoGilbert@rossvet.edu.kn, or make an appointment to see me with my Assistant, Venetta Zakers (VZakers@rossvet.edu.kn). If you don’t mind the stairs, take a chance and come up to the top floor of the Academic Hub. If I am not in a meeting I will be happy to talk to you. In the meantime, make the most of your time here: go to class, study hard, use all the resources designed to help you, and take some time to enjoy the island. Best wishes for a very successful semester.

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7th Semester Spotlight: Emillie Dodd

1. Where are you from? Where’s home?
I am from Raleigh, North Carolina!

2. Where did you go to undergrad and what degree did you earn?
I went to the University of North Carolina Wilmington and earned my Bachelor’s in Biology.

3. What made you choose RUSVM?
I chose RUSVM because I thought going to school in a different country would offer unique opportunities I would not otherwise have the chance of experiencing. It has proven true over and over again!

4. What has been your favorite part about living on St. Kitts?
Exploring! There is so much to do and see both on St. Kitts and Nevis (not to mention the underwater world as well). I loved the hikes, historic sites, scuba dives, beaches, and the occasional “treat yourself” overnights at the resorts.

5. What advice do you have for students coming to RUSVM and St. Kitts?
Push your limits, get out of your comfort zone, and get involved! Your education and experience here are exactly what you make of it. A little over two years goes by much faster than you think, so take advantage of every minute and opportunity.

6. What is your ultimate career goal with your DVM?
To own and operate an eco-friendly clinic! I believe that the veterinary industry can make great strides towards operating in a more sustainable manner.

7. Where are you headed for your clinical studies? University of Illinois

8. After being at RUSVM 6+ semesters, what fact about yourself would your colleagues be surprised to learn?
Emillie is my alias. My real name is Emily.

9. What has been your favorite course at RUSVM and why?
My favorite course has been Small Animal Medicine. It was the first class where I felt like all of the material I had learned came together and I could apply my clinical background the best.

10. Who is your professional role model and why?
Dr. Timothy Ford, because each time I was an assistant to him, I admired his interaction with clients, his compassion for animals, and his methodical and calculated process of practicing medicine. He embodies all of the traits of a veterinarian I hope to acquire.

11. What extra-curricular activities have you been involved in at RUSVM?
There are so many great opportunities here. I couldn’t settle on one! Besides being a member of several clubs, I was also a Research Assistant for Dr. Valentine, VP of VBMA, and a Liaison for the American Heartworm Society. I am still a Student Ambassador, a PASS committee member, and an officer of Green Initiative.

12. If you could thank one person for all you have achieved, who would that be?
I would like to thank my Mama! When I was a little girl, she set up a day for me to shadow a veterinarian. She took it seriously that it was something I was passionate about and she didn’t even disown me when I came home to tell her about all of the blood and guts I saw. She has been supportive of my dream ever since!
Celebrate and honor with the Diversity Committee

The RUSVM Diversity Committee recognizes various special dates and moments. The committee is dedicated to sharing information with students so they become well-rounded, culturally-aware professionals.

International Day of Friendship

Canada Day and US Independence Day

Pride Month Festival

International Women’s Day

Living better with the Wellness Committee

The RUSVM Student Wellness Committee is dedicated to the support and promotion of student health and wellness. The SAVMA Student Wellness Officers act as a liaison to student health services, the Counseling Center, RUSVM Gym, and other wellness resources.

Puppy Therapy

Kitten Therapy

Diversity and Wellness Committee join forces for the mental health walk.
Although equine veterinarians represent a smaller proportion of our alumni community and within this group, an even smaller number specialize in the equine athlete, our May 2019 White Coat speaker is one of them and he has made a successful career of it. A competitor himself, he shared his passion, as well as his business acumen, with our campus students at two lunchtime lectures.

Dr. Otto Stanislaw, a Minnesota native, attended Arizona State University for his undergraduate degree and continued onto veterinary school at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine, graduating in 2002. He began his veterinary career for the Caine Veterinary Teaching Center at the University of Idaho.

In 2005, he returned to Arizona to begin private practice and has since served individual horse owners and ranches in the greater Scottsdale, Arizona area offering a fully mobile equine practice bringing state of the art veterinary services and diagnostics directly to his clients.

Dr. Stanislaw continues to refine his sports medicine and reproduction expertise while participating in International Society of Equine Locomotor Pathology (ISELP), leading American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) roundtable discussions with esteemed colleagues and attending a variety of continuing education events around the country.

Dr. Stanislaw is an Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) Permitted Treating Veterinarian and avid American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), American Public Health Association (APHA), National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) and National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) participant and futurity prospect breeder at his ranch in Scottsdale, Arizona.

This was Dr. Stanislaw’s first visit since graduating and while he noted how much the island has changed, he recalled fond memories of his time at RUSVM and remains a proud Rossie.
RUSVM announced the opening of the new study area, the Don Smith Learning Center, located on the ground floor of the Research and Pathology Building.

This new space has seating for approximately 64 people and is primarily intended to be used as an open group study space. It will occasionally be used for other pre-scheduled training, business or small conference sessions.

RUSVM adds more study space

This represents phase II of our drive to increase study spaces across the campus and we are now planning phase III, which will be dependent on the final location of the newly refurbished clinical skills laboratory.
Who doesn’t love sea turtles?

We’re lucky to share our beaches and waters in St. Kitts and Nevis with these shelled friends of the sea. Whether it’s swimming with them on our dives or watching the hatchlings scurry across the sand to the water, they’re a common sight for Rossies year round, be it hawksbills, greens or even leatherbacks.

Thursday, May 23, was World Turtle Day, there was no better time to remember these guys need our help. Here are four ways you can be a sea turtle ambassador the next time you head to the beach.

1. Stay Away from the (White) Light

During the times of the year when sea turtles are nesting (leatherbacks nest February through July with hatchlings emerging through September; hawksbills and greens May through December with hatchlings emerging through February) ensure that you do not use white lights on the beaches. You can accommodate sea turtles by turning off or completely shielding any lights that are visible on the beach, and by using a red filter on your flashlight if you are out at night.

2. Stay on the Road

Always avoid driving on the beaches as ruts left behind by tires create insurmountable obstacles for tiny hatchlings working their way to the ocean and vehicular traffic can compact sand over incubating nests preventing animals from being able to emerge.

3. Don’t Start the Fire

Avoid bonfires on nesting beaches. Bonfires require permits from the St. Kitts and Nevis Fire Department and when an application for a permit is requested they will speak with the St. Kitts Department of Marine Resources and St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network (SKSTMN) to determine which beaches have active sea turtle nests or female emergence events and permits will not be issued for those beaches.

4. Personal Space

If you encounter a nesting female, give her space. If you encounter a sea turtle in the water, observe from a distance and do not touch, capture, or attempt to ride them.

Report all sea turtle-related activity to a Sea Turtle Hotline, like the one we have on St. Kitts (869) 764-6664. Like ours, most will have a trained volunteer or staff member available 24/7 to respond to your calls and answer your questions.
The PASS program had 31 students complete their certificates during the summer semester of 2019.

The PASS certificate program consists of forty-five minute talks presented by different faculty and administrators. The program is open to all RUSVM students and students that attend at least 6 presentations earn the PASS certificate and 5 Professional Development Fund (PDF) points.

SAVMA attended the inaugural National Association of Black Veterinarians conference

Several members of RUSVM’s SAVMA board attended the inaugural National Association of Black Veterinarians conference that was held in New Orleans on July 7 and 8, 2019.

The conference, themed “The State of Blacks in Veterinary Medicine,” featured several distinguished keynote speakers, presenters, panelists, including Dr. Patti Rose, President & Founder of Rose Consulting and Author, Dr. Kauline Cipriani, Assistant Dean for Inclusive Excellence UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and Dr. Garrmel Funches, Director of Community Education and Outreach, University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Our SAVMA team connected with key presenters and leaders and are planning on creating strong partnerships to advance minorities in the field.
You spent your winter break a little differently than most college students. Mind telling us a little about that?

Yes, I went to Thailand to volunteer at Elephant Nature Park (ENP).

My friend Iris Lee (a 5th semester student at Ross Vet) and I decided to book the final two weeks of our winter break at ENP. So we spent five days in Phuket to do some diving in Racha Noi and the Phi Phi Islands, as well as explore the main island, and then we spent the rest of our trip at ENP.

That had to be an incredible experience.

It was absolutely amazing!

I had worked at The Toledo Zoo for 3 years, and while I have been quite close to an elephant there, as well as on my volunteer trips to Africa, this was an entirely different experience. To be up close and personal with them everyday just takes your breath away.

So what all did you get to do while at ENP?

It was pretty routine every day, since most of the elephants in their care have one problem or another from the industries they were rescued from (logging, street begging, trekking, etc).

We would start the day by doing morning rounds with about 25 elephants, giving a variety of supplements in either sticky rice, pellets or bread balls. Following that, we had two elephants with foot wounds from land mines that needed treatment. One elephant, Thai Koon, had a pretty bad injury that still needed a lot of attention after 6 years of healing, and we were heavily involved with her. Treatment would involve a foot soak for 30 minutes, followed by a scrub, rinse with antibiotics, and in the morning we would wrap the foot to protect it from the elements.

Aside from helping with the elephants, we also helped out with the horses on the property in the afternoons; brushing them, picking their hoofs, and applying hoof oil.

Wow. Any favorite parts?

So many! Just seeing the differences in the elephants as the days went on was fantastic. We quickly learned to tell the different adults and babies apart by the way they were playing and interacting in their family, or by little physical details.

You were able to work with baby elephants, too?

Yeah! They were so smart!

We’d be getting ready to treat Sri Prae, the other elephant we treated for a landmine wound, and the babies in the nearby family would run to us and steal our bananas. They may be adorable, but they are strong and speedy!

What inspired you to seek out a volunteer opportunity internationally over winter break?

Coming to Ross Vet, I knew I wanted to take as many externship opportunities as I could. That’s exactly what I’ve done. I have been lucky enough to go on amazing externships to Belize, Guatemala, Las Vegas, South Africa, and now Thailand. It has all been so amazing!

That’s great! And I assume you’ve learned plenty through your tips, huh?

Definitely! While learning in a classroom is fundamental, I believe, as students, we really learn the most from worldly experiences and really getting out into the field, whether that be in a small-animal clinic or in the jungle!

Those classroom skills still come in handy, though, right?

What I learn at Ross Vet always comes full circle with these externships, whether it’s a refresher in pharmacology, getting ahead in surgery, wound care, etc. Plus, I always come back to the island with more confidence in myself and my career path than before.

So where do you see your career taking you – the clinic or the jungle?

Maybe both! I will graduate August 2020, and when I first get out into the real world I would love to get into a small-animal practice that sees exotics and has a lot of mentorship opportunities. My main goal, though, is to one day work in a zoo or with wildlife.
The Toxic Plant Garden renamed in honor of Dr. Shokry

The Toxic Plant Garden has been renamed in honor of Dr. Ibrahim Shokry. The garden is now known as the Dr. Shokry Toxic Plant Garden.

The garden is home to a wide variety of plants that are poisonous to animals, and are commonly kept as houseplants in the USA, Canada and Europe. Live plants, germinating seeds and bulbs have all been imported to create this innovative educational resource. Since it was created in 2002, the garden has been home to over 100 plants. Dr. Shokry also created a toxic plant museum that features artificial plants and he is working to complete a medicinal plant garden.

We caught up with Dr. Shokry where he shared how flowers, grass seed, and insecticides can harm your pet.

**Flowers**

You should be aware of flowering plants that are toxic to pets, such as azaleas, daffodils, tulips, lily of the valley and oleander,” Dr. Shokry said. “Most of these plants are mild in toxicity if eaten by a pet, but some are lethal.” Oleander is high on the danger list, as one leaf can kill a dog or cat. Lilies are also highly toxic to cats if ingested.

**Grass Seed**

“Grass seed is one of the most common problems that vets see in the spring and summer, especially dogs. The seeds can penetrate the skin easily and can get lodged in the body.”

**Insecticides and rodenticides**

Both these are designed to kill or keep animals and bugs away. Thus, you should definitely keep pets away from them.

“Sometimes an owner will see their pet eat these, and when they don’t show any distress signs, they think the pet is ok. Many times, you won’t see signs until two days later, and then it can be too late.”

Empower Scholarship Program provides financial support

Every semester, 16 Rossies receive financial support through the Empower Scholarship Award. We caught up with a recent scholarship recipient, Junior Saint Preux, who shared his thoughts on the award.

“I have made it my duty to always stay involved in my community in order to be a bridge builder for many who choose to follow my footsteps. Receiving this scholarship makes my family very proud of my endeavors and encourages me to continue to pursue my dreams.”

Junior is RUSVM’s current SAVMA President and an active community member. His goal is to be able to give back in the form of scholarships for future college students and to teach young people in his community that they can do anything they set out to accomplish. He looks forward to when he begins practicing as a veterinarian for it is his belief that pet ownership improves the health and disposition of their humans.

Current Rossies are encouraged to apply for the Empower Scholarship Fund scholarships that will close on October 25, 2019. There are 16 awards being offered this fall cycle. To learn more about the scholarships and apply, send email to info@empowerscholarshipfund.org.