Introducing the first newsletter for the Vet Med GSA programs!

*Striving to keep everyone informed and involved*

During a recent Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine Graduate Student Assembly (Vet Med GSA) meeting it was suggested to start issuing a quarterly newsletter that focuses on the research side of the veterinary college. This includes the graduate students involved in the Masters of Public Health program and Ph.D. or master’s programs in Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences as well as the research faculty and staff.

The aim for the newsletter is to improve distribution of information within and between the programs and everyone involved in them. Additionally, we would like to be able to include the newsletters on the website to give potential students and faculty members better visualization of the work and accomplishments within our programs at veterinary college.

**March**
- 2 – RIP Seminar: Danielle Yugo
- 5 – Casino Night
- 6 – Guest Seminar: One Health, Dogs, Disease and Ticks (Susan Little)
- 9 – RIP Seminar: Miranda Vieson
- 14 – Town Hall Meeting
- 17 – VMCVM Research Symposium
- 23 – RIP Seminar: Narges Dorratoltaj
- 23 – GSA Research Symposium
- 30 – RIP Seminar: Maria Cristina Villafranca

**April**
- 6 – RIP Seminar: Kris Eden
- 9 – Big Event
- 13 – RIP Seminar: Angela Ives
- 16 – 3.2K for 32 Day of Remembrance
- 16 – Spring Wine Social
- 20 – RIP Seminar: Narre Ketusing

**In this issue:**

**2**
CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERIES
A new seminar series designed to prepare graduate and post-docs for future career opportunities

**4**
THRIVING IN GRADUATE SCHOOL
A blog post by Karen P. DePauw, Dean of the Virginia Tech Graduate School

**5**
VET MED GRADUATE STUDENTS AT ANNUAL VCOM RESEARCH DAY
Three awards received by Vet Med GSA graduate students

**7**
A GLIMPSE INTO BIOMEDICAL AND VETERINARY SCIENCES
Graduate students talk science and research at Kid’s Tech University
Fall BMVS Wine Social Raises Donations for Micah’s Backpack

Graduate students and faculty enjoyed the fall wine social held at the University Club on Oct. 17, 2015, hosted by the Vet Med GSA. As part of the wine social, non-perishable food items are collected and proceeds from admission are donated to Micah’s Backpack. Following the fall wine social, the Vet Med GSA was able to donate 209 food items, helping 268 local children during the Thanksgiving holiday. Additionally $475 was donated for the Christmas holiday.

Micah’s Backpack is a local charity organization that provides direct food assistance for children of low-income families. More information about the organization can be found online at: www.micahsbackpack.org

New Professional & Career Development Series Offered

Co-sponsored by Stamps Family Charitable Foundation, Vet Med GSA, and Regenerative Medicine IGEP

The Professional/Career Development Seminar Series and Workshop began this semester on Jan. 29 with a seminar on CVs, Resumes, and Cover Letters presented by Claire Childress from Virginia Tech Career Services. She provided examples of CVs and resumes and answered questions from the students regarding format, content, and the etiquette of communication with potential employers before, during, and after the application process.

A second session was recently held on Feb. 19 and featured Stuart Mease from Virginia Tech’s Pamplin School of Business discussing contract negotiations. The hottest topics of discussion were negotiating salary and creating a ranking system of priorities, values, and benefits that students would like in their first job after graduation. Negotiating between multiple job offers was also discussed.

Future sessions will be held in VMIA 220 at 9 a.m. every Friday (excluding weeks of spring break for both the university and the veterinary college) for the remainder of the semester.

Session recordings, resources, schedule, announcements, and other
helpful information related to the series can be found on the Scholar site at: 
https://scholar.vt.edu/portal/site/biomedprof
Requests to join the scholar site, questions, and comments can be addressed to the series organizer, Miranda Vieson (mvieson@vt.edu).

The tentative schedule for the rest of the series:

**Feb. 26** - "Mingle Like You Mean It"
**March 4** - Communicating Science Initiative
**March 25** - Financial Planning
**April 8** - Preparing for Graduation
**April 15** - Community amongst researchers, clinicians, and students by Dean Clarke
**April 29** - Robyn Cardwell to speak about her career track and experiences (Industry)

Pending sessions:
April 1 - NIH grants discussion panel
April 21 (Thursday) - Post-doc discussion panel

27th Annual Graduate Research Symposium
*Thursday, March 17, 2016*

The Annual Graduate Research Symposium is coming up on March 17! Students will be presenting their current research through poster or oral presentations throughout the day. Research topics range from veterinary clinical sciences, population health sciences, immune and inflammatory diseases, bacteriology, virology, parasitology, regenerative medicine, and more. The day also features keynote speaker Sandra Armstrong from the University of Minnesota.

April 9, 2016
The Big Event at Virginia Tech is a student-run community service effort. Every spring, thousands of students, faculty, and staff come together to complete nearly one thousand community service projects throughout Blacksburg, Christiansburg and the New River Valley.

SIGN UP AND VOLUNTEER with the Vet Med GSA!!! Registration: https://registration.vtbigevent.org/sign up/index/joingroup/code/E7875-00079
Thriving in Graduate School

A blog post by Karen P. DePauw, Dean of the Virginia Tech Graduate School

Graduate school should be challenging but doesn’t need to be overly stressful. Stress can come in many forms. Many graduate students will likely say that they experience stress in graduate school and that’s just part of being a graduate student. As a graduate dean, I hear this frequently and understand but it is time to change the paradigm from surviving to thriving.

A quick “google” search easily reveals a number of blogs, books and articles on tips for surviving even thriving in graduate school. One example is the blog entitled Graduate Student Way and a recent post with advice from three PhD students. It is worth a quick read to understand that one is not alone and the feelings are common among graduate students. It also points out that warning signs of stress should not be ignored but understood and addressed.

Other examples include an article on 12 tips for surviving and surviving in grad school, a self-published book by David Nguyen which offers some basic tips for surviving graduate school and an archived site from University of Oregon called Survive Grad School that contains some valuable information. Many Graduate Schools today offer resources and guidance for graduate student success on their websites, at orientations and workshops and through social media (e.g., UNL, UBC, GMU).

Lots of good advice and tips are available but I wish to encourage actions of a more personal nature that are often de-emphasized during graduate education. Here, I pull from the advice offered by University of California at Berkeley (UCB) regarding stress and graduate school. Please read and consider the four primary points that are encouraged: make yourself a priority, take control of your life, avoid procrastination through time management, and look for social support. These tend to go counter to the perceived “survival” nature required for graduate school and the toughness and persistence at all costs needed for success. Rather, I would argue that taking time for oneself is critical. Although a graduate student can sometimes feel as if one doesn’t have control, it is important to exercise one’s agency and control over one’s life. Further it is important to learn to say “no” and to establish some balance between graduate study and personal life. Of course, time management is crucial to academic progress and when there's lots of work to do and deadlines, managing one’s time becomes even more important. As is a key component of the VT
Graduate School’s experience, establishing a community (communities) and social networks for support are critical. These are essential within the academic setting as well as beyond the university setting.

In my welcome remarks to incoming graduate students, I share four conditions for graduate study: academic quality, time to fiddle, a baggy idea of truth, and a sense of community. I encourage the graduate students to reflect upon these throughout their graduate study and to realize that failure is a part of the learning process. I also encourage them to work hard and to play as well. To thrive in graduate school is to enjoy the challenge and to pursue opportunities as they present themselves.

One additional thought. Keep a sense of humor because it helps to keep one grounded and attentive to the richness of the graduate experience. Visit PhD comics.

- Dr. Karen P. DePauw, Vice President and Dean of Graduate Education

The keynote speaker for the 24th Annual Graduate Research Symposium is Sandra K. Armstrong, professor of microbiology, from the University of Minnesota. Her research is focused on pathogenic Gram-negative bacteria that are commonly implicated in respiratory infections of humans and other mammalian species. Specifically, she focuses on *Bordatella* spp. like *B. pertussis* (whooping cough), *B. parapertussis*, and *B. bronchiseptica*. Armstrong strives to understand iron acquisition systems in the bacteria during the course of infection. According to her faculty bio page, “Nearly all organisms require nutritive iron and its assimilation is essential for invading pathogenic bacteria to establish infection in the iron-limiting environment of the host.”

This year's symposium is being held on Thursday, March 17 at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine and features all the current biomedical and veterinary science research occurring in the college.

Vet Med Graduate Students at Annual VCOM Research Day

*An important aspect of the One Health Initiative is sharing information between various disciplines in both human and animal health to promote a deeper understanding of disease.*

Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) held its annual Research Recognition Day on Friday, Feb. 26. As part of the One Health initiative and to promote collaboration, the college invites
Think carefully about your primary research question, learn and utilize the latest research techniques, develop a team approach to research, find collaboration to broaden your reach, attend professional research meetings at least yearly, and seek out opportunities to serve on NIH study sections or other review bodies.

- Advice to investigators from Justin McCormick

Researchers from partnering residency programs, the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute (VTCRI), graduate programs at Virginia Tech, and Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine to present posters.

Guest speakers included Justin McCormick from Michigan State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine presenting success stories in research. Gary Simonds from the Neurosurgery Department at Carilion Clinic and his current residents also spoke about conducting research during residency training, and Stephanie Townsell spoke about exciting new updates and offerings from the American Osteopathic Association.

The day concluded with distribution of awards for poster presentations, 3 of which were awarded to veterinary college’s graduate students: Miranda Vieson – 1st place in clinical research
Giulio Menciotti – 2nd place in clinical research
Alexander Kwiatkowski – 2nd place in biomedical research

Terry Hrubec also received an award for her outstanding research on quarternary ammonium compounds.

Representation from the VMCVM this year included: Dylan McDaniel (Allen lab), Adrian Castaneda (Reilly lab), Alexander Kwiatkowski (He Lab), Qizhi Qin (Dervisis Lab), Miranda Vieson (Luo lab), Giulio Menciotti (Borgarelli lab), Nicholas Parkinson (Equine Medicine), Amy Santonastaso (Equine Medicine) and Virginia Corrigan (Small Animal Community Practice).
A Glimpse into Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences

*Kids’ Tech University* is a program at Virginia Tech with one primary goal: creating the future workforce in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by sparking kids’ interest in these fields.

Graduate students from the veterinary college provided interactive experiences and information to kids aged 9-12 to showcase research in biomedical and veterinary sciences. The booth featured culture plates containing bacteria grown from the hands before and after handwashing, mouth, ear, and objects commonly handled throughout the day (cell phone, money, etc). Kids were able to examine a microscopic sample of a horse lung infected with pneumonia and see the differences compared to normal lung histology. The booth also showed parasitology samples (roundworms from a horse, tapeworms from a dog, and *Cuterebra* spp. larvae) and examples of species variation in veterinary medicine (limbs from a horse, cow, emu, and canine).

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

associated protein of Mycobacterium tuberculosis is a virulence factor that stabilizes Mce transporters." Molecular Microbiology. PMID: 26712165. IF: 5.026. (12/03/15; In Press).