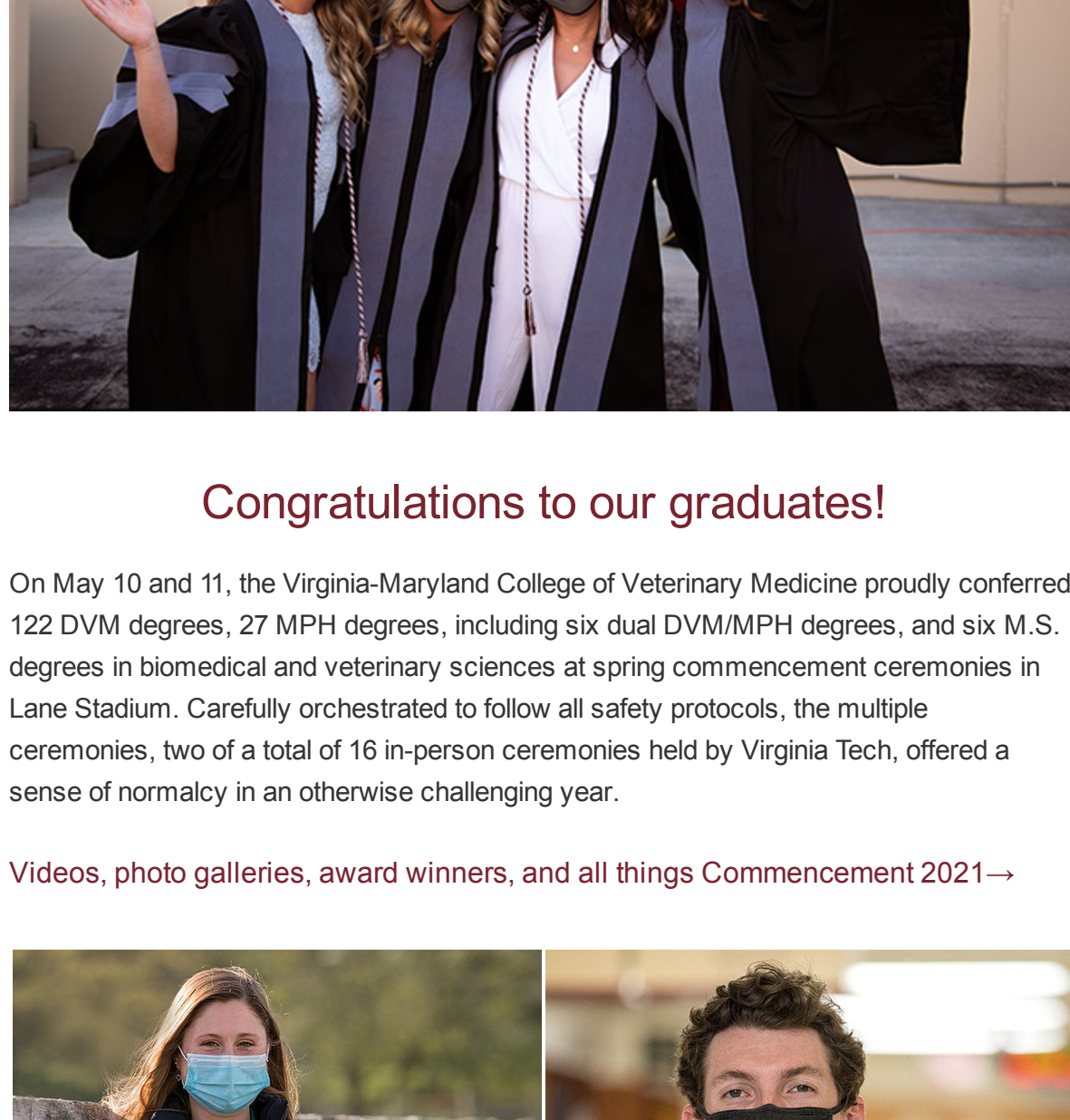


## Vet Med News

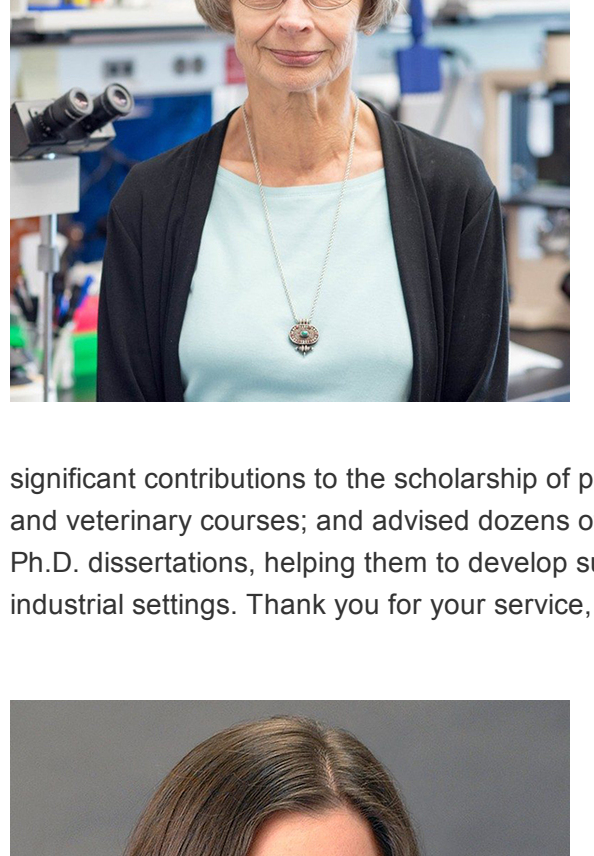
MAY 2021



### Congratulations to our graduates!

On May 10 and 11, the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine proudly conferred 122 DVM degrees, 27 MPH degrees, including six dual DVM/MPH degrees, and six M.S. degrees in biomedical and veterinary sciences at spring commencement ceremonies in Lane Stadium. Carefully orchestrated to follow all safety protocols, the multiple ceremonies, two of a total of 16 in-person ceremonies held by Virginia Tech, offered a sense of normalcy in an otherwise challenging year.

[Videos, photo galleries, award winners, and all things Commencement 2021](#)→

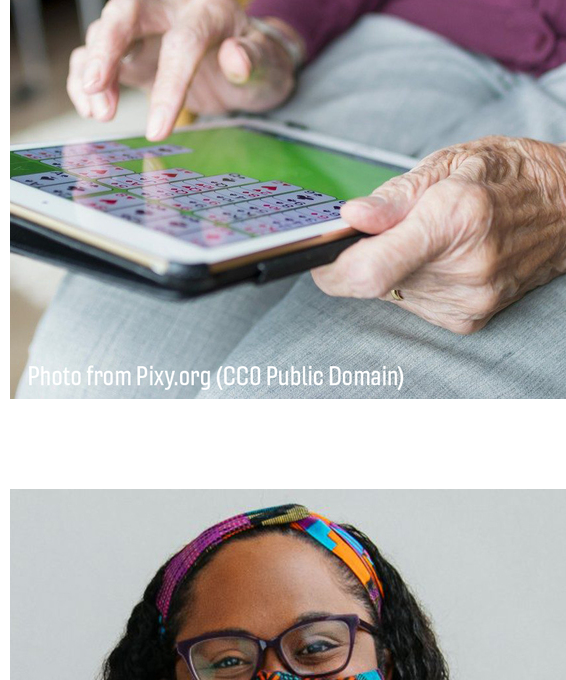


Victoria Simpson, DVM Class of 2021  
valedictorian



David Toomey, DVM Class of 2021  
Outstanding Graduating Student

## Around the College

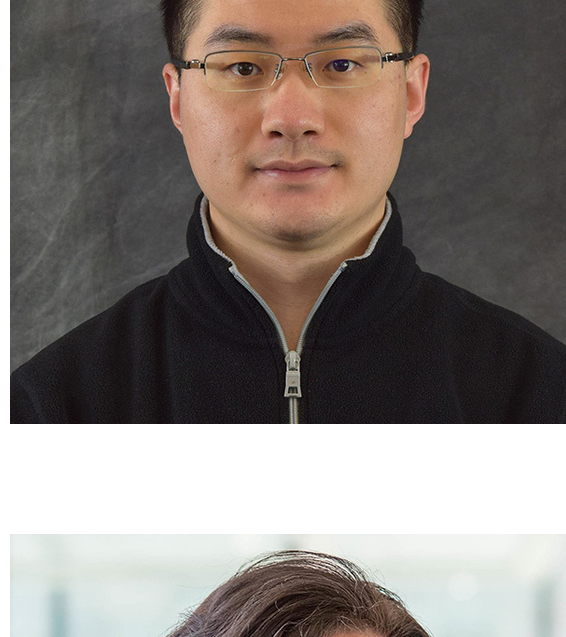


### Zajac honored with emerita status

Congratulations to Anne Zajac, professor of parasitology in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology (DBSP), who was conferred the title of professor emerita by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors in recognition of exemplary service to the university.

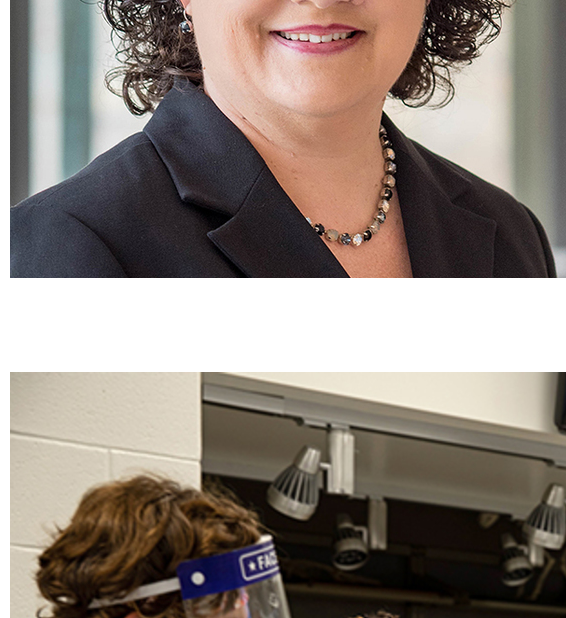
A clinical parasitologist and a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Microbiologists, Dr. Zajac has been a member of the Virginia Tech community since 1986. During her career, she has made

significant contributions to the scholarship of parasitology; taught undergraduate, graduate, and veterinary courses; and advised dozens of students completing master's degrees and Ph.D. dissertations, helping them to develop successful careers in both academic and industrial settings. Thank you for your service, Dr. Zajac!



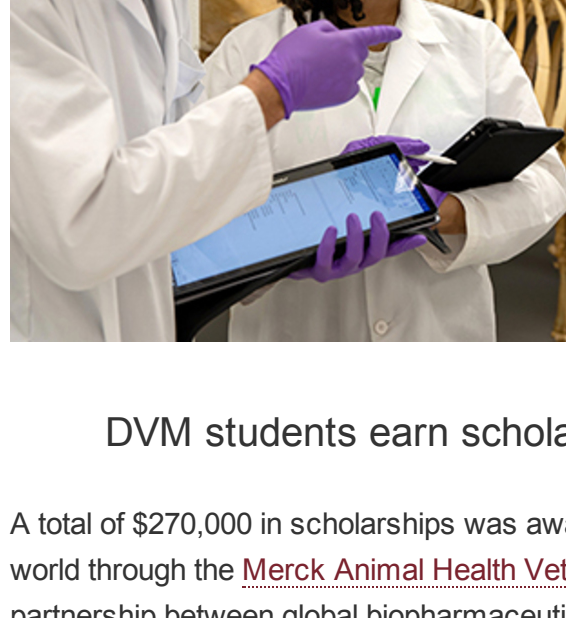
### Fluid flow as potential key to fight Alzheimer's disease

Michelle Theus, DBSP associate professor of molecular and cellular neurobiology, is part of a research team led by principal investigator Jennifer Munson, associate professor at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, that has been awarded \$3.5 million by the National Institute on Aging to study the role of fluid flow in Alzheimer's disease.



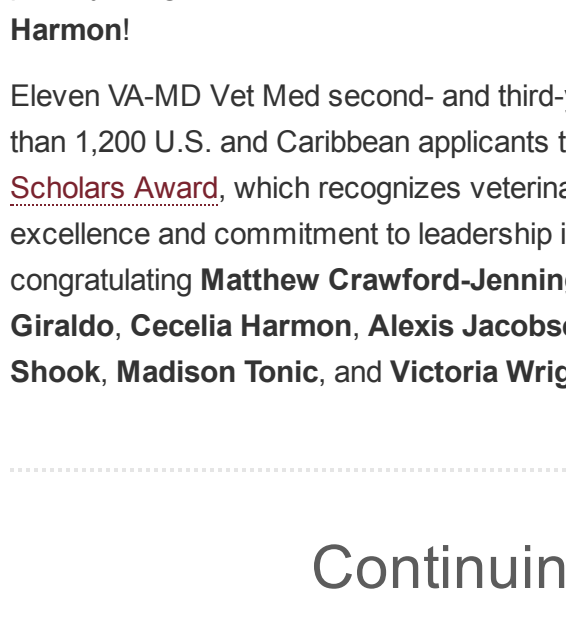
### 'Buddy program' benefits students and the community

A new partnership among VA-MD Vet Med's Public Health Program, Virginia Tech's Center for Gerontology, the Corps of Cadets, the New River Valley Public Health Task Force, the Blacksburg Police Department, and the Blacksburg Health Department, COVID Companions is a buddy program that pairs older adults with a friend within the community to help curb isolation.



### Cook selected as VT Engage Faculty Fellow

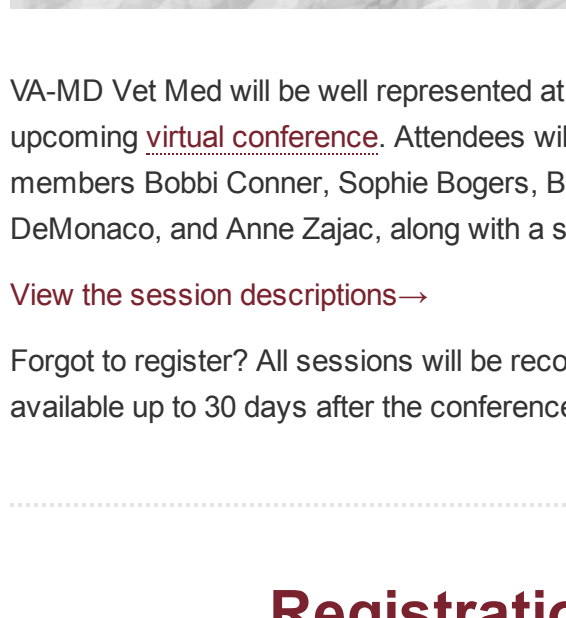
Natalie Cook, assistant professor of public health in the Department of Population Health Sciences, was named a member of the fourth cohort of the VT Engage Faculty Fellows program, which aims to increase the prevalence and quality of community-based work at Virginia Tech in the areas of service learning, leadership education, and civic engagement. Fellows receive funding to expand current offerings or create new ones.



### 2021 Diversity Scholars share projects virtually

Among Virginia Tech's 10 Diversity Scholars who developed projects aimed at improving and enhancing inclusion at the university is Jing Ju, a Ph.D. student in VA-MD Vet Med's Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences Program.

Ju proposed forming an AdvantageVT student committee of international graduate and undergraduate students to build relationships and to raise awareness of opportunities and resources across Virginia Tech.



### Webb honored with McComas Staff Leadership Award

Angela Webb, academic programs and event coordinator, received the McComas Staff Leadership Award for her efforts to organize safety protocols that enabled veterinary students to continue essential hands-on learning required of them to be future veterinarians. The award honors the significant leadership contributions of a classified or university staff member at Virginia Tech. Congratulations, Angie!

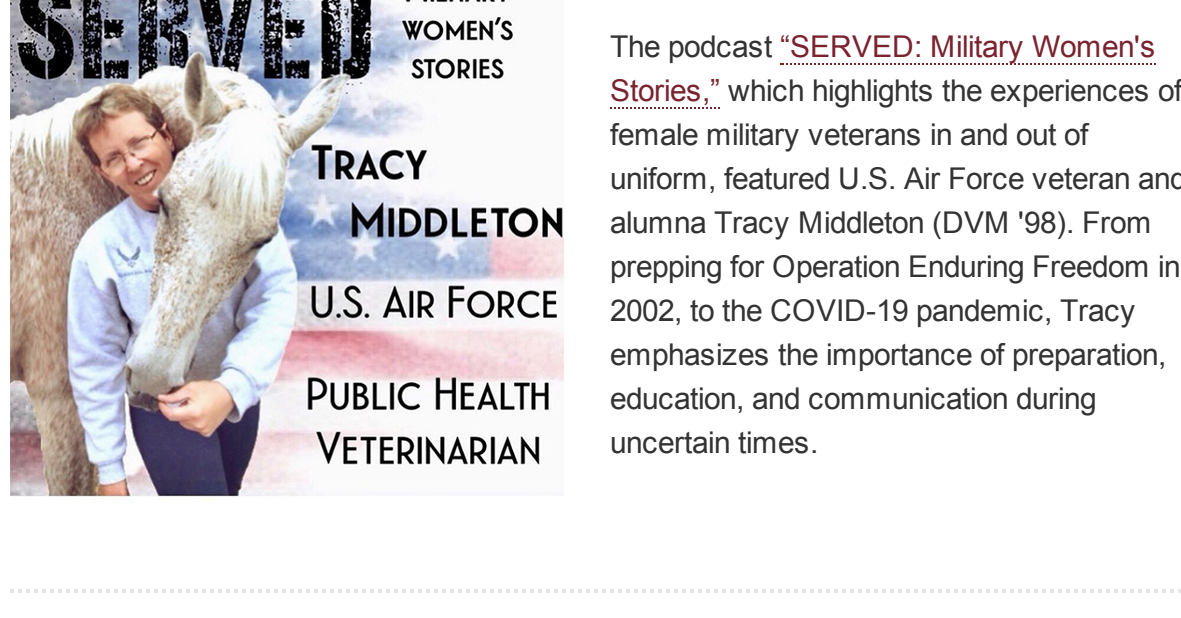


### DVM students earn scholarships from Merck and Zoetis

A total of \$270,000 in scholarships was awarded to 54 veterinary students from around the world through the Merck Animal Health Veterinary Student Scholarship Program, a partnership between global biopharmaceutical company Merck and the American Veterinary Medical Foundation. The second- and third-year students pursuing careers in companion animal or large animal medicine were selected based on academic excellence, financial need, leadership, and area of interest within the profession. VA-MD Vet Med proudly congratulates **DVM Class of 2023 recipients Gregor Greer and Cecelia Harmon!**

Eleven VA-MD Vet Med second- and third-year DVM students were selected from more than 1,200 U.S. and Caribbean applicants to receive the 2021 Zoetis Veterinary Student Scholars Award, which recognizes veterinary students with a history of academic excellence and commitment to leadership in the veterinary medicine field. Join us in congratulating **Matthew Crawford-Jennings, Kia Davis, Adriana Fratz, Jonnathan Giraldo, Cecelia Harmon, Alexis Jacobsen, Amanda Logan, Kayla Rojas, Gabriella Shook, Madison Tonic, and Victoria Wright!**

## Continuing Education



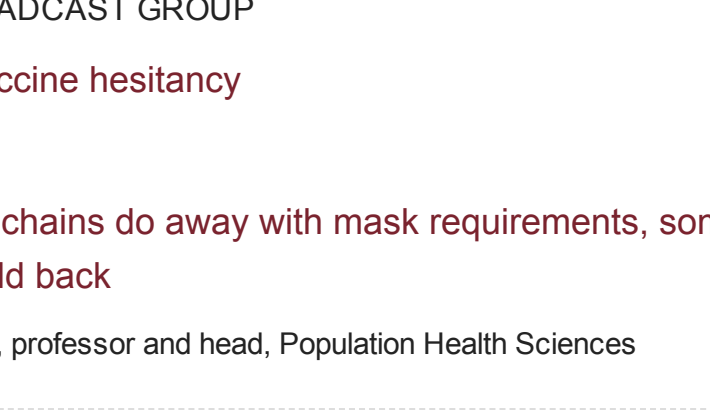
VA-MD Vet Med will be well represented at the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association's upcoming virtual conference. Attendees will hear from Dean Dan Givens and faculty members Bobbi Conner, Sophie Bogers, Becky Funk, Kevin Lahmers, Stefanie DeMonaco, and Anne Zajac, along with a strong turnout of our alumni.

[View the session descriptions](#)→

Forgot to register? All sessions will be recorded (unless otherwise noted) and will be available up to 30 days after the conference.

## Registration now open!

[Mentor Program](#) • [Career Fair](#) • [Reunion](#) • [Continuing Education](#)

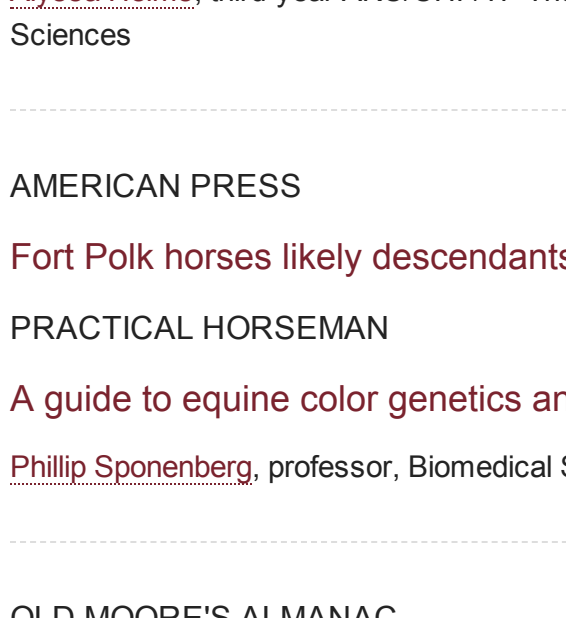


[Students](#) • [Alumni](#) • [Practitioners](#)

Mark your calendars and register now for Connect 2021, featuring mentorship and career opportunities, continuing education, and reunion celebrations, live and in person at VA-MD Vet Med on Sept. 17-18. All alumni, students, and practitioners (who are looking to mentor and/or hire) are encouraged to attend!

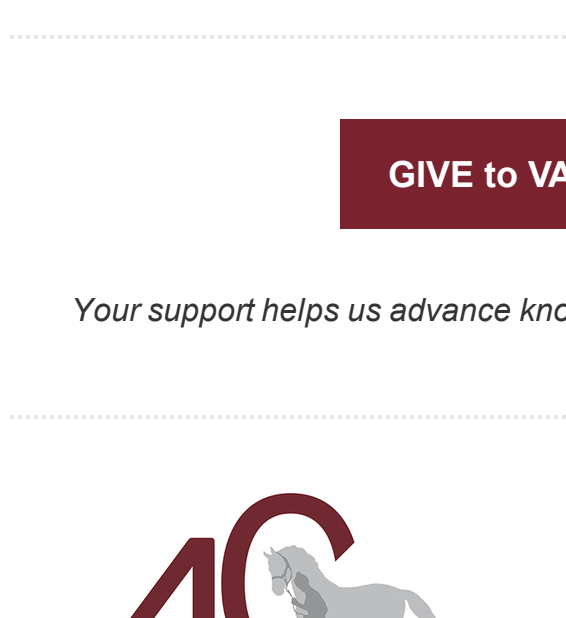
## Vet Med Alumni

[VA-MD Vet Med Alumni online](#)→



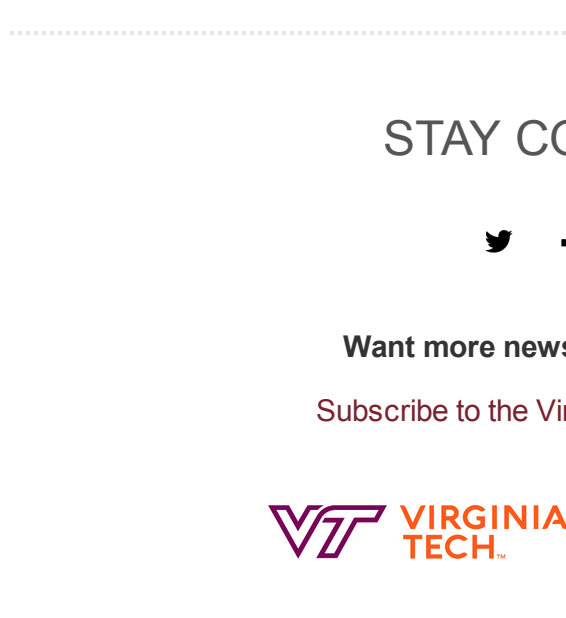
### Alumna doing her part to bring diversity to field of veterinary medicine

Los Angeles veterinarian Tierra Price (DVM '20, MPH '20) said she "grew up thinking that [she] was going to be one of the first Black veterinarians because [she] had never seen any." While still a student at VA-MD Vet Med, Price created the BlackDVM Network to counter that sense of isolation. Today, the network is thriving.



### Alumna joins VA-MD Vet Med faculty

Vanessa Oakes (DVM '16, MPH '16), who has been enrolled in VA-MD Vet Med's combined anatomic pathology/Ph.D. program since 2016, has accepted a position as clinical instructor of anatomic pathology at the college! We are so excited that Oakes is joining our faculty ranks and look forward to her assuming this new role.



### Alumna featured on podcast

The podcast "SERVED: Military Women's Stories", which highlights the experiences of female military veterans in and out of uniform, featured U.S. Air Force veteran and alumna Tracy Middleton (DVM '98). From preparing for Operation Enduring Freedom in 2002, to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tracy emphasizes the importance of preparation, education, and communication during uncertain times.

## Vet Med in the News

NPR

Coronavirus FAQ: You're vaccinated. Cool! Now about those 'breakthrough' infections ...

Coronavirus FAQ: I had COVID. Should I get the vaccine?

Charlotte Baker, assistant professor, Population Health Sciences

USA TODAY

What's a college degree worth? New report pushes for more transparency to close disparities

Photo of the DVM Class of 2019

THE WEATHER CHANNEL

Super vaccine: Scientists invent new vaccine that can fight all forms, mutations and strains of coronaviruses

SALON

The quest for a universal coronavirus vaccine

X.J. Meng, University Distinguished Professor, Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology

HUFFPOST

What's safe to do inside without a face mask? Here's a guide.

SINCLAIR BROADCAST GROUP

Addressing vaccine hesitancy

WTVR

As nationwide chains do away with mask requirements, some small businesses hold back

Laura Hungerford, professor and head, Population Health Sciences

BUSINESS INSIDER

Europe may allow vaccinated US travelers this summer. Here are the documents you'll need and how to know when it's safe.

SINCLAIR BROADCAST GROUP

Fauci: Vaccines are 'highway to normalcy,' but masks still needed for now

TSA extends mask mandate for air travel, public transit into September

NEWSNATION NOW

Doctor responds after CDC guidance says fully vaccinated people don't need to wear masks outside

Lisa Lee, research professor, Population Health Sciences, Virginia Tech Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

Steps to prevent pregnancy problems in bitches

Julie T. Cecere (DVM '09, M.S. '12), clinical associate professor, Small Animal Clinical Sciences

Alyssa Helms, third-year AKC/CHF/TF Theriogenology Fellow, Small Animal Clinical Sciences

AMERICAN PRESS

Fort Polk horses likely descendants of 'globally rare' breeds

PRACTICAL HORSEMAN

A guide to equine color genetics and coat color

Phillip Sponenberg, professor, Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology

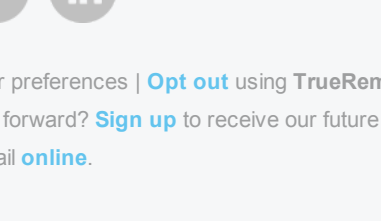
OLD MOORE'S ALMANAC

Dogs and tech – How science is giving man's best friend the good life

Virtual reality at VA-MD Vet Med

**GIVE TO VA-MD VET MED**

*Your support helps us advance knowledge, improve health, and save lives.*



**We're celebrating 40 years!**

*VA-MD Vet Med's first class matriculated in 1980.*

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