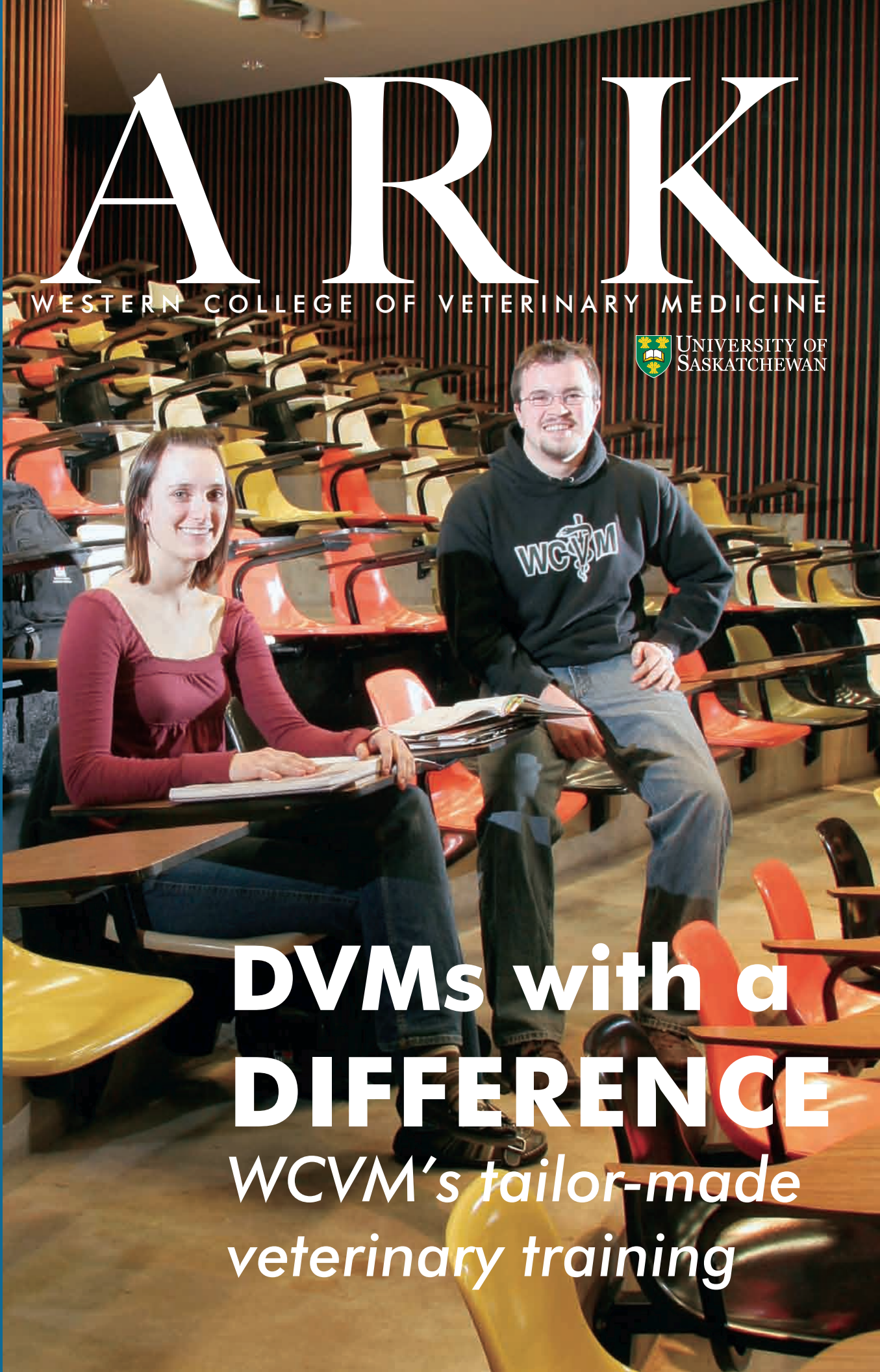


THE

# ARK

WESTERN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE



**DVMs with a  
DIFFERENCE**  
*WCVM's tailor-made  
veterinary training*

WINTER 2008

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**FRONT COVER:** Veterinary students Stephani Windsor and Mike Kosheluk are members of the Class of 2011 – the first class to test-drive WCVM's revised curriculum.

## THE ARK

The Ark is produced twice a year by the Western College of Veterinary Medicine. To learn more about WCVM, visit [www.wcvm.com](http://www.wcvm.com).

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# Dr. Reuben Mapletoft, S.O.M.

**Dr. Reuben J. Mapletoft**, a professor in WCVM's Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences and an internationally known researcher of animal reproduction, was one of seven Saskatchewan citizens to receive the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in 2007.

Since its inception in 1985, 148 men and women have received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit — the province's highest honour.

Lieutenant Governor Dr. Gordon Barnhart invested Mapletoft and the other recipients into the Order during a special ceremony in Regina on December 13, 2007.

"The newest members have been well chosen; each has made extraordinary contributions that have benefited the people of Saskatchewan and beyond," said Barnhart.

In Mapletoft's case, three decades of research in reproductive biology and the application of assisted reproductive technologies such as embryo transfer, superovulation and ovulation synchronization in cattle have benefited producers worldwide. Some of Mapletoft's key achievements in those areas include:

- patenting a substance that replaces serum in the cryopreservation of embryos. He also assisted in the development of a drug to induce superovulation in cattle, allowing for increased embryo production from superior animals.
- developing embryo transfer protocols that have become the *de facto* standard for clinical use worldwide. His recent work on estrus synchronization and ovulation induction also allows producers to schedule artificial insemination, increasing its use as a breeding tool.

Mapletoft has brought over \$5.75 million in research funding to the University of Saskatchewan through grants from federal and provincial governments, industry associations and private corporations. His work has led to new developments, setting international standards and improving cattle genetics on every continent.

The researcher is past president of the International Embryo Transfer Society and served as its Chair of the Import/Export Committee for 10 years. He is founding president of the Canadian Embryo Transfer Association and is currently a member of the Certification Committee.

Active in technology transfer, Mapletoft has given over 150 invited lectures in more than 30 countries and has trained graduate students from all over the world. He has contributed more than 300 papers to published conference proceedings and authored more than 130 refereed publications. In addition, Mapletoft has conducted more than three dozen embryo transfer workshops for over 200 veterinary professionals around the world.

For more information about the 2007 Saskatchewan Order of Merit recipients, visit [www.gov.sk.ca](http://www.gov.sk.ca) (news releases).



## MAPLETOFT'S MAJOR MERITS

- **1998:** Honorary life membership, Canadian Embryo Transfer Association.
- **2000:** Honorary life membership and Distinguished Service Award from the International and Canadian Embryo Transfer Society.
- **2003:** Distinguished Researcher Award, University of Saskatchewan.
- **2005:** Earned Doctorate, University of Saskatchewan.
- **2007:** Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

This fall, we welcomed our 42nd class of veterinary students to the Western College of Veterinary Medicine: 73 talented individuals who hail from communities across Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nunavut.

These students are beginning their careers at an exciting point in the profession's global evolution — something that's reflected in WCVM's future plans. In developing the College's latest Integrated Plan, we made the concept of "one world, one health, one medicine" a key theme for the next four years. The American Veterinary Medical Association — as well as the American Medical Association — endorsed this important concept in 2007, and we now look forward to promoting "one world, one health, one medicine" with our health sciences colleagues across Canada. The challenge for the College will be to integrate the same concept into our academic and research programs by 2012.

What can the Class of 2011 expect as they begin their veterinary education? Here's a quick sketch of the College's latest developments and achievements that will enrich the students' WCVM experience:

- WCVM's fourth-year students consistently score higher than average on the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE), and the Class of 2007's performance was no exception. These results reflect the high quality of a WCVM-based veterinary education in comparison to other veterinary institutions in North America.
- The four western provinces recently signed a new five-year Inter-provincial Agreement for WCVM. This agreement reaffirms the College's stability, plus it acknowledges that WCVM is a valuable resource to all of its provincial partners.
- Members of the Class of 2007 will be the first to use the College's revised DVM curriculum that received final approval from the University of Saskatchewan's Academic Programs Committee in July 2007. During the next four years, the students will experience the new program's refined core courses, its wider range of elective courses, and its additional instruction in communications, leadership, professional practice management and other relevant areas.
- WCVM's first-year students entered the College at the point when construction crews have finished 70 per cent of WCVM's four-year, multi-phase expansion and renovation project. Despite the challenges associated with escalating costs and labour shortages, the College is still on course for completing all major construction projects by 2009.
- WCVM students, faculty and staff now have access to renovated areas like the Animal Care Unit, the Veterinary Teaching Hospital's new large animal handling facility, and the expanded small animal surgery and clinical area. The new research wing and the Veterinary Teaching Hospital's two-storey addition also opened their doors in mid-2007.
- WCVM is now home to the Westgen Research Suite — the research wing's second-floor laboratory that focuses on animal reproduction-related research. In September 2007, WCVM celebrated the suite's official opening with the directors of Westgen — a producer-owned, non-profit society that promotes the development and use of assisted reproduction in dairy and beef cattle. The organization's members donated \$640,000 toward the research wing's construction.
- WCVM is part of the U of S Master of Public Health degree program as well as the university's newest project: a School of Public Health, established



## A MESSAGE from the DEAN

*By Dr. Charles Rhodes, WCVM Dean*

in July 2007. WCVM joined other U of S health sciences colleges to collaborate with local and provincial health agencies on developing both programs, and those co-operative efforts have been very rewarding. With both programs in operation, the U of S is developing a preeminent learning and research centre in public health with strong links to a veterinary college — the first to do so in Canada.

- WCVM's undergraduate students have access to new faculty members who specialize in emerging areas such as vaccinology, animal and human vaccine development, zoonotic diseases, and emergency and critical care.
  - WCVM's research and graduate teaching programs are thriving. In the past five years, the College's research dollars have risen by 142 per cent to more than \$10 million in 2006-07. Part of that growth stems from an increase in federal Tri-Council funding that's nearing the \$1 million mark for this year. The College has also experienced substantial increases in funding for research studies related to wildlife and food animals. In addition, the number of WCVM graduate students has risen to 135 for 2006-07 — a 61 per cent increase in the past five years.
  - Many WCVM graduates have made their mark in the research world. Two recent examples are Drs. Gregg Adams (WCVM '82) and Jane Alcorn (WCVM '94) who were selected as the 2007 recipients of the U of S Distinguished Researcher Award. Adams was honoured for his work in reproductive biology while Alcorn was recognized for her work in pharmacokinetics.
- It's an outstanding list of positives about WCVM's people, programs and facilities that certainly helps to instil pride in our students, faculty, staff and all of our supporters across Canada. These developments and achievements also place the College in a good position as we bring a broader, more global perspective to our programs and to our profession.
- Integrating the concept of "one world, one health, one medicine" into our daily lives isn't something that will happen overnight. But after writing and reading about all of WCVM's latest "assets," I know we have the exceptional people and the crucial resources we need to meet that key goal — along with many other important objectives — over the next few years. **A**

**WCVM PROFESSOR RECEIVES CARL BLOCK AWARD:** WCVM professor and researcher **Dr. John Campbell** is the 2007 recipient of the Canadian Animal Health Coalition's prestigious Carl Block Award in honour of his research contributions to Canada's cattle industry.

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association nominated Campbell for his "... tireless dedication to producers. His research efforts, approach, honesty, sincerity and respect of farmers and ranchers have helped to position the Canadian cattle industry to be among the best herds in the world."

Campbell received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph in 1985. After three years of practising in rural Ontario, Campbell returned to OVC as a graduate student and completed his Doctor of Veterinary Science degree.

Campbell joined the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in 1991 where he continues to teach beef cattle health management and epidemiology. In addition, he is actively involved in the College's Field Service and is part of WCVM's disease investigation unit. His numerous research initiatives focus on the control and management of infectious diseases in beef cattle operations. During a year-long sabbatical leave in 2004, Campbell worked at OVC and acted as a consultant for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency on the emergence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the Canadian cattle population.

During the past few years, Campbell has also played an integral role in forming and developing the new Master of Public Health degree program at the University of Saskatchewan.

CAHC presents the annual award to an individual who exemplifies commitment to the Canadian livestock industry and its contribution to the Canadian economy through robust animal health. It's presented in honour of Carl Block, one of CAHC's founders and a cattleman whose dedication to Canadian agriculture and commitment to animal health will long be remembered. Block was the first chair of the Canadian Cattle Identification program, director of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, inaugural chairman of the Canadian Animal Health Coalition and a former president of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association.

Originally from Alberta, Block moved to Saskatchewan in 1986 where he operated a 900-head cow-calf and backgrounding operation. Block died in a plane crash on May 29, 2002. A bronze plaque in his honour hangs in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

**BELOW:** Dr. John Campbell (left) accepts his award from Rob McNabb, vice chair of the Canadian Animal Health Coalition.



## WCVM & BEYOND

**WCVM PIONEER HONOURED:** The late **Dr. Otto Radostits**, one of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's founding faculty members, is among five 2008 inductees to the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame.

The first clinician hired at WCVM in September 1964, Radostits went on to play an integral, pioneer role in establishing and developing the new veterinary college on the University of Saskatchewan campus. As a veterinary educator, clinician and author, Radostits had a profound influence on his students, on the growth of WCVM, and on his beloved profession.

During his 43-year teaching career, Radostits taught nearly 2,500 veterinary students in Ontario, Indiana and Western Canada. In particular, he was a strong advocate of using health and production management of the herd to control disease — particularly infectious diseases — in food-producing animals. Radostits also co-authored and edited several texts that have become mainstays of the profession around the world.

Radostits died on December 15, 2006, at the age of 72 years.

The 2008 Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place at the Western Development Museum in Saskatoon, Sask., on August 2 and 3, 2008.

**AABP INTERVET MENTOR OF THE YEAR:** In September 2007, **Dr. Stephen Radostits** (WCVM '88) attended the American Association of Bovine Practitioners' annual conference in Vancouver, B.C., to accept a very special honour on behalf of his late father. The association selected **Dr. Otto Radostits** as the first recipient of the AABP Intervet Mentor of the Year Award.

The newly established award is presented annually to an AABP member who has been engaged in the field of veterinary medicine for at least 25 years and has served as both adviser and role model to pre-veterinary and/or veterinary students.

"My father was very passionate about veterinary medicine and especially about doing things for the right reasons — based on evidence and science," wrote Radostits in a thank you message to AABP. "I think this is a great award because it's important for us to recognize and appreciate our mentors."

**AABP AWARDS STUDENTS:** **Josh Lindenbach** of Balgonie, Sask., began his final year at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine with a bang. Just a few weeks into the school year, Lindenbach travelled to Vancouver, B.C., to receive an American Association of Bovine Practitioners' 2007 Bovine Veterinary Student Recognition Award during the organization's annual conference that ran from September 20 to 22.



Lindenbach was among five North American veterinary students to receive the prestigious annual AABP awards that are sponsored by Schering-Plough Animal Health. The \$1,500 award recognizes veterinary students who have been active in AABP-supported student organizations and who are committed to developing their careers in bovine practice.

The international bovine practitioners association also awarded the AABP Amstutz Scholarships — worth \$2,000 each — to 20 veterinary students from across North America. Among the recipients was **Amy Konschuh** of Nokomis, Sask., who is in her third year at WCVM. The annual scholarships are awarded to veterinary students who have an overall interest in bovine practice and who are involved in bovine-related extracurricular activities.

**TUBERCULOSIS TEAM HONOURED:** In June, Parks Canada recognized the efforts of a group of wildlife and livestock experts in managing and eliminating bovine tuberculosis from area around Manitoba's Riding Mountain National Park. At a special awards ceremony in Ottawa, the Manitoba Bovine Tuberculosis Management Team received the 2007 Public Service Award of Excellence in the category of excellence in citizen-focused service delivery.

The winning team consisted of employees from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Parks Canada — including **Dr. Todd Shury**, a Parks Canada wildlife health specialist who is based at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

Over the past few years, the team had worked with representatives from the Province of Manitoba and the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC) to control the disease among wildlife and livestock herds in the area.

In particular, CCWHC's **Dr. Gary Wobeser**, a WCVM professor of veterinary pathology, and **Dr. Marc Cattet**, a professional research associate in WCVM's Department of Veterinary Pathology, were instrumental in helping the national team realize its goals. The positive result of their teamwork came in September 2006 when the CFIA finally declared the area around Riding Mountain National Park to be free of bovine tuberculosis.

**SVMA AWARDS:** Several WCVM faculty and alumni were honoured during the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association's annual general meeting and conference in September 2007:

- WCVM pathologist **Dr. Gary Wobeser**, retired adjunct professor **Dr. James Orr**, WCVM professor emeritus **Dr. Craig Riddell**, **Dr. Peter Hurst** (WCVM '69) and **Dr. John Delack** (WCVM '82) were among veterinarians who received life memberships from the provincial association. Other honourees included **Drs. Leslie Ellis** (OVC '67) and **Thomas Hurst** (BRIS '65).

- **Dr. Sandra Stephens** (WCVM '80) received the SVMA Communications Award in recognition of her efforts at presenting veterinary information, knowledge and advice to the public.

- **Dr. Eldon Pederson** (WCVM '76) received the SVMA Meritorious Service Award in honour of his outstanding contributions to the quality of life in his community of Melfort, Sask.

- **Dr. Julie de Moissac** (WCVM '86) received the SVMA Veterinarian of the Year Award — the association's most prestigious honour.

**WANT MORE NEWS FROM WCVM?**  
**Visit WCVM News, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's online news site, at [www.wcvm.com/collegenews](http://www.wcvm.com/collegenews).**

**IN MEMORIAM: Dr. Lawrence L. Kramer**, a former professor of large animal surgery at WCVM, died on November 8, 2007, after a brief illness. He was 74.

After receiving his DVM degree at Iowa State University in 1963, Kramer went on to complete a Master of Science degree in animal genetics at the University of Missouri. He also became a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Following graduation, Kramer began his career in veterinary education at Cornell University then joined WCVM's Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences as a professor of surgery in 1967. During his time at the College, Kramer influenced a generation of equine surgeons and lameness diagnosticians.

Kramer retired from teaching in 1976 and served as a New York State Racing Authority commission veterinarian for 20 years. Based at his beloved Double Eagle Farm in Cortland, New York, Kramer expanded his special interests in mules and draft horses — gaining recognition as an accomplished breeder and showman of Belgian draft horses. **A**



*Rosen Collection*  
**HONoured**

A rare collection of veterinary books, materials and artifacts at the University of Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine Library is featured in a special book and on a web site commemorating the Association of Research Libraries' 75th anniversary.

*Celebrating Research*, which profiles selected rare and special collections available for use in major research libraries across North America, includes the WCVM library's Rosen Collection of Veterinary History. The collection includes 500 books, journals, newsletters, family records, pamphlets, clippings, certificates and awards that reflect the history of veterinary medicine and agriculture in North America and Europe from the early 16th to the mid-20th centuries.

The collection was compiled by Dr. Jack Rosen, a veterinarian from London, Ont., who spent more than 30 years building his specialized collection of valuable publications and memorabilia. The collection's oldest book is a 1528 printing of *Libri de re rustica*, an anthology of ancient Greek and Roman agricultural manuscripts.

In 2004, Rosen worked closely with WCVM librarian Jill Crawley-Low to bring the complete collection to the college's library. "I wanted the collection to stay together, and I wanted people to have a chance to see it," explained Rosen in a 2004 interview.

The Rosen Collection of Veterinary Medicine is available for viewing in the WCVM library's rare books room or in a rotating display at the veterinary college. For more information, please contact the WCVM library ([vetlib@library.usask.ca](mailto:vetlib@library.usask.ca) or 306-966-7205).

Like generations of WCVM students before them, Mike Kosheluk and Stephani Windsor spend hours learning about physiology, histology, anatomy and biochemistry. But unlike their predecessors, these first-year students and their classmates are getting a more integrated introduction to veterinary medicine's core courses.

The difference is in the delivery. Instead of studying each topic in isolation, the first-year students now learn how all of the basic sciences work together in one body region or system — such as the cardiovascular and respiratory systems — before moving on to other essential areas like reproduction and neuroscience.

“There’s an overlap between classes that helps you to understand the material. I find it’s easier to relate concepts of physiology to concepts of anatomy if you’re studying how they work in a particular system at the same time,” explains Kosheluk, a Bachelor of Science graduate at the University of Saskatchewan.

The dovetailed approach is also working for Windsor, who took two years of animal science courses at the University of Manitoba before entering WCVM.

“I didn’t take the physiology and anatomy courses that other students had taken before coming here, so I was at a bit of a disadvantage. Studying systems seems to make more sense, especially when you don’t have the background. It helps to re-emphasize what we’re learning, and it brought me up to speed with the rest of the class.”

### Curriculum changes add personal touch

The co-ordinated course material is just one of several new features found in the veterinary college’s revised Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) curriculum. The program gained approval from the U of S academic program committee in July 2007 — the final step in a challenging, three-year revision process.

A task force guided the process, but its overall success is a result of the support and participation of the entire faculty, stresses Dr. Jeremy Bailey, WCVM’s associate dean (academic) and leader of the task force. “Virtually every faculty member participated to some degree in this revision process.”

As he points out, one of the biggest changes in the revised curriculum is that WCVM has moved from a “lock-step” program where all students take the same courses to a more flexible, “core-elective” approach.

“After taking all of the program’s core courses during their first two and a half years, our students will now be able to choose from more than 30 elective courses in their third year so they can gain more in-depth information in particular interest areas,” explains Bailey. “It’s a program that allows them to tailor their education to their specific needs.”

The elective courses provide further instruction in a wide range of disciplines. While the majority of courses focus on clinically-related subjects, the list also includes courses that cover relevant issues to today’s veterinarians such as animal welfare, public health and sustainable development. Special topics courses will also provide additional flexibility and opportunities for students with very unique interests.

Kosheluk is looking forward to the chance to choose courses: “Personally, I’m interested in parasitology, zoonoses and public health so I’d be interested in taking electives that focus on those areas. Having some more knowledge will definitely help me if I want to find a job in those fields.”

Allowing students to customize their veterinary degrees was a recommendation that Bailey often heard as he and his colleagues revised the veterinary college’s existing curriculum. In fact, Bailey points out that all of the changes are based on valuable feedback that was gathered from students, alumni and faculty during the past few years.

For instance, the program’s first-year curriculum now includes training in communications, leadership and practice management. The revision team made those additions in response to comments from former WCVM students and western Canadian practitioners who stressed the need for more training in these areas.



# TAILOR-MADE VETERINARY TRAINING

**While the Western College of Veterinary Medicine’s curriculum has undergone revisions to meet today’s demands, some things never change — like the College’s mandate of producing top graduates with a broad-based veterinary education.**

Team members also reviewed and refined all of the core course materials to ensure that the content was relevant and met the demands of today’s veterinary profession — a common concern among students, faculty and practitioners in the field.

### Final result: top-notch DVMs

While Windsor appreciates the need for updating and paring down the content of core courses, she also wants to be sure that these changes don’t cause challenges for her and her classmates down the road.

“We keep hearing how well WCVM students do on the NAVLEs (North American Veterinary Licensing Examinations), and we want to make sure that we maintain that reputation. The revised curriculum is great as long as we’re not lacking in some of the core courses once we get to the end,” says Windsor, president of WCVM’s first-year class.

That concern was constantly discussed before the revision team made any changes, says Bailey. But, as he points out, WCVM’s DVM program has always aimed at covering material to a higher level than what’s expected on the

profession's national licensing examinations — and that won't change with the College's revised curriculum.

"While the new program allows students to tailor to their specific needs in their third year, these changes don't constitute specializing or what's called 'streaming' in post-secondary education. This core-elective program will still enable the College to produce graduates with a broad-based, comparative education in veterinary education. That will remain the same."

Bailey adds that regular feedback from students, faculty — and eventually, western Canadian practices — will help to ensure that WCVM's revised curriculum is doing its job from year to year.

Halfway through their first year, Windsor and Kosheluk agree that the new program offers some real benefits to students — but they do question some aspects of the curriculum. One concern: because of the systems-based approach to taking basic sciences, a particular course like biochemistry can be absent from regular studies for several weeks at a time.

"It makes it a bit difficult because we're not focusing on biochemistry, so you don't feel like you need to study for it. But then again, you don't want to forget about it either. Getting used to this course set-up is a learning process," Windsor says.

Some additions may need further evaluation, but there's one feature in the revised curriculum that gets an immediate thumbs up from Kosheluk and Windsor: scheduled Wednesday afternoons off.

Bailey says the addition of a free afternoon during the week was based on the results of a survey that WCVM conducted with the university's student health representatives. "The survey looked at stress-related issues among students and one significant factor was workload. To address that, we thought it would be a good idea to give students a mid-week break. They can use the free time to do

whatever they want: go to the library, play sports, whatever. It's some time they can use to give their lives a little balance."

"Our class seems to be a little more relaxed, they seem to be enjoying the year and we really enjoy the integrated study time on Wednesday afternoons. My only worry is whether they'll still give us the mid-week break next year," says Windsor.

It's that kind of feedback that members of WCVM's curriculum revision team will be waiting to hear. "We've introduced a number of new things in each year of the program, and as the curriculum is rolled out each year, we'll have to review what's happened in the previous year and make adjustments. Getting constructive feedback from the students will be an important part of this process," says Bailey. "I would hope that the process of reviewing and refining this curriculum is ongoing. Really, it should never stop." **A**

## OLD *versus* NEW

**While WCVM's revised DVM curriculum sports some new improvements, other key features remain the same in this updated model.**

**OLD DVM:** Curriculum is based on a "lock-step" model where all students complete the same core and limited elective courses during their final year.

**NEW DVM:** Curriculum is based on a core-elective model where all students take the same core courses in their first two and a half years but have the opportunity to customize their education during the final half of their third year. Students choose from more than 30 elective courses that cover a range of veterinary disciplines.

While this new approach allows students to focus on their interests, it also allows WCVM to quickly respond to new developments in the profession. "If there's a sudden need for a new course, then it can be introduced as an elective. That will be much easier to do than in the previous model," says Dr. Jeremy Bailey, WCVM's associate dean (academic).

**OLD DVM:** WCVM professors teach core courses on an individual basis with limited informal integration of course materials.

**NEW DVM:** Delivery of core course material is now co-ordinated so students learn all aspects of one particular body region before moving on to the next area. WCVM faculty have also reviewed all core courses to ensure that their content is relevant and timely for today's veterinary profession. As well, first-year students participate in "biomedical rounds" where they apply what they're learning in the classroom to real clinical cases.



**OLD DVM:** Undergraduate classes and labs were scheduled throughout the week with no formal break.

**NEW DVM:** No classes or labs are scheduled for Wednesday afternoons to alleviate students' workload. Students can use the free time to study, play sports, go to the library, participate in extra-curricular activities — or simply relax.

**OLD DVM:** After four years, WCVM's previous DVM program produced graduates with a broad-based, comparative education in veterinary medicine.

**NEW DVM:** WCVM's veterinary students will still receive a comprehensive, well-rounded veterinary education that prepares them for all potential career options in the profession. In addition, they will leave WCVM with more enhanced knowledge in specific disciplines — information and experience that will be invaluable as these new veterinarians make their career choices.

**Previous page:** Mike Kosheluk is a first-year student from Endeavour, Sask., while classmate Stephani Windsor (above) hails from La Riviere, Man.



# Westgen Research Suite Opens



On September 18, one of two open-plan laboratories in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's new, \$8-million research wing gained its official name: the Westgen Research Suite. Equipped with cell culture rooms, storage space for liquid nitrogen, a cold room and thousands of dollars worth of specialized equipment, the new laboratory provides WCVN scientists with everything they need to advance reproductive techniques in cattle, swine, sheep and other livestock species.

The facility's focus on reproduction research is the ideal fit for its namesake: Westgen, Western Canada's Genetics Centre. Based in Milner, B.C., the producer-owned, non-profit society has promoted the development and use of assisted reproduction in Western Canada's beef and dairy industries since 1944. In March 2005, Westgen contributed \$640,000 toward the research wing's construction.

"Nearly three years ago, our board of directors decided to invest in a bigger and better regional veterinary college — and we believe our investment will benefit everyone involved in Canada's livestock sectors," said Westgen President David Janssens during the laboratory's dedication. Janssens — along with the rest of Westgen's board of directors — attended the special event at WCVN.

In the past three decades, the College's scientists have pioneered new techniques in artificial insemination, spermatology and embryo transfer for use in livestock. WCVN researchers have also gained international recognition for their studies of ovarian follicle development and the regulation of reproductive cycles.

"The resources available in the new Westgen Research Suite and in the entire research wing will allow our scientists to continue making major improvements in areas such as assisted reproduction and the cryopreservation of reproductive cells and tissues," said Dr. Charles Rhodes, dean of WCVN.

The Westgen Research Suite will also serve as a focal point for the Canadian Animal Genetic Resources Centre — an animal genetics conservation initiative that's supported by WCVN, the University of Saskatchewan's College of Agriculture and Bioresources, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

"It won't be long before the Westgen Research Suite becomes home to some very exciting discoveries. And when it does, those achievements will stand as true examples of what Westgen and WCVN have accomplished together," said Rhodes. **A**

**TOP:** Westgen's board of directors with WCVN representatives after the research suite's opening. **TOP LEFT:** Westgen President David Janssens (left) and WCVN Dean Dr. Charles Rhodes. **CENTRE:** Research assistant Dr. Kosala Rajapaksha in the Westgen Research Suite. **BOTTOM:** Dr. Norman Rawlings (second from left) gives Westgen directors and employees a tour through the Westgen Research Suite.

# Construction past 70 per cent mark

Three years after the first signs of construction appeared at WCVM, crews have completed 70 per cent of the veterinary college's four-year, multi-phase expansion and renovation project.

"Despite the challenges associated with escalating costs and labour shortages, construction crews have managed to complete nearly a dozen projects including extensive ones like the two-storey addition to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital and the research wing expansion," says WCVM Dean Dr. Charles Rhodes. "We've now surpassed the two-thirds mark, and we're on course for completing all major construction projects by 2009. It's a good position to be in as we experience our third winter of construction."

Overall costs for WCVM's original expansion and renovation plans have grown from the previous projection of \$57 million to an estimated \$71 million — solely because of the dramatic escalation in construction costs across Western Canada.

But, as Rhodes points out, WCVM isn't the only institution facing this type of cost crunch. Expansion and renovation projects at Canada's three other regional veterinary colleges are also experiencing budget escalations. In response, Rhodes says the four regional veterinary institutions have asked the federal government for further financial assistance to complete the infrastructure programs.

As those discussions continue, construction crews at WCVM have moved inside to escape Saskatchewan's frigid temperatures and driving snow. David Humphreys of UMA Engineering Ltd., project manager for WCVM's expansion and renovation project, gives an overview of projects that are on the go or close to completion:

- **Diagnostics area:** By November 2007, workers had completed the structural and site work on this expanded area that's located on the veterinary college's southeast side. Now, workers are shifting their focus to interior work — efforts that will be completed later in 2008. The installation of the structure's roof allows crews to seal off the interior areas so they can continue working in heated conditions even when outside temperatures plunge during winter months. Crews have been working on the diagnostics area since September 2006.

- **Glassware and media preparation room renovation:** Besides renovations to the area and some minor millwork improvements, the project included upgrades to the

## RESEARCH OPEN HOUSE:

In early December, more than 70 people gathered at WCVM to hear Dr. Gregg Adams' reflections about his 25-year career in veterinary medicine and animal reproduction research. Adams gave the lecture in honour of his 2007 U of S Distinguished Researcher award. After his entertaining presentation, visitors toured through WCVM's Westgen Research Suite where Adams and his colleagues conduct animal reproduction research. As part of the tour, WCVM researchers and graduate students demonstrated their research work and the new technologies in the lab. **AT LEFT:** Graduate student Garry Nagra describes the view on a microscopic slide. **CENTRE:** Dr. Gregg Adams (left) joins Canadian Light Source executive director Dr. Bill Thomlinson and his wife Tuula as they listen to graduate student Sunita Awate (right) describe her research.



The expanded diagnostics area on WCVM's east side is scheduled for completion later in 2008.

college's sterilizing equipment for glassware. The four-month project was completed in 2007.

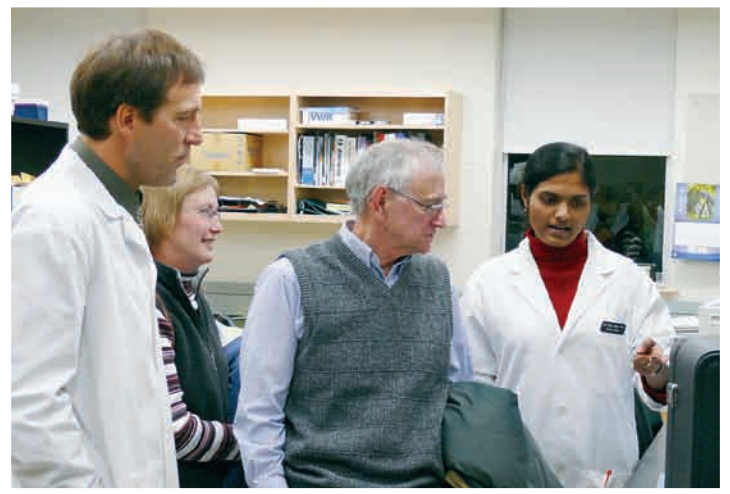
- **Veterinary Teaching Hospital renovations:** Construction crews are working on the second phase of the hospital's renovations that includes a new materials handling area, new examination rooms for small animal patients, and a dental surgery suite. Workers are scheduled to complete the renovations by the end of the year, and the new areas should be ready for staff, faculty and students by spring 2008.

Here's a look at the major construction activities that begin in 2008:

- **Academic projects:** Construction on most of these projects will begin during the summer months of 2008. These initiatives include renovations to kennels, records room, lecture theatres, the veterinary microbiology laboratory and teaching space.

- **Large Animal Clinic renovations:** This project was originally tendered in late 2006 but wasn't able to proceed. The project team is now developing a revised plan for tender in early 2008.

- **Diagnostics laboratory renovations:** These renovations are part of the final phase in the college's entire expansion and renovation project. Design work will continue in 2008 and construction will begin after crews complete the expansion of the diagnostic area. Visit [www.wcvm.com](http://www.wcvm.com) for further construction updates. **A**



**WCVM FALL AWARDS NIGHT:** Veterinary students, faculty and staff took home more than \$120,000 worth of honours from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's fall awards program on September 28, 2007. More than 300 people attended the popular event that includes the annual white coat ceremony for WCVM's first-year students (see story on page 13).

Each year, WCVM's undergraduate students have access to more than \$360,000 in financial assistance through numerous scholarships and bursaries that are supported by the University of Saskatchewan, provincial governments, organizations, businesses and individuals. WCVM annually presents its undergraduate scholarships and bursaries during the College's fall awards program and its spring graduation banquet.

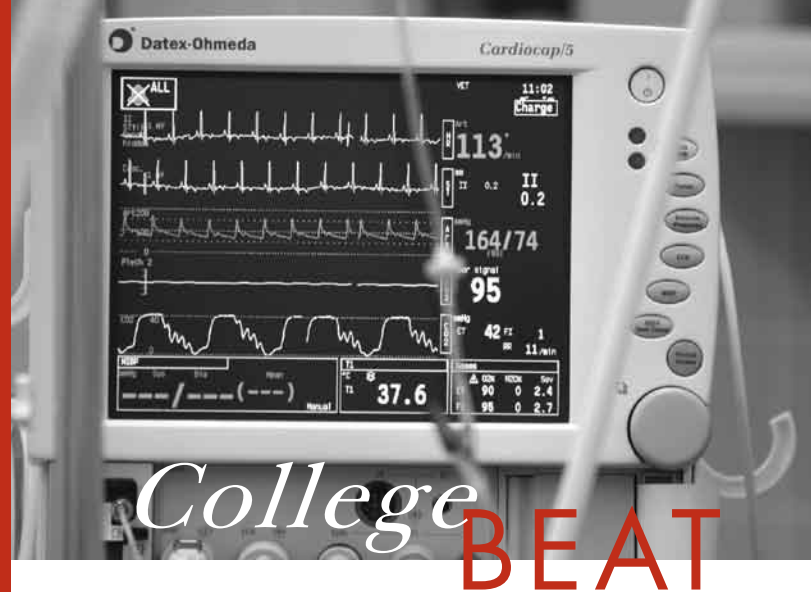
While the spring program focuses on awards for WCVM's graduating class, the fall awards event celebrates the scholastic, research, teaching and service achievements of all students, faculty and staff at the veterinary college. The special evening gives WCVM supporters the opportunity to meet the talented men and women who benefit from their awards. Plus, it's the ideal time for undergraduate and graduate students to meet their benefactors and personally thank them for supporting their dreams.

For a complete listing of WCVM's award recipients, please visit the October 2007 archives of *WCVM News* ([www.wcvm.com/collegenews](http://www.wcvm.com/collegenews)).

Besides the student-oriented awards and scholarships, the following faculty and staff were honoured for their efforts in the past year:

- Dr. Katharina Lohmann: Pfizer Carl J. Norden Distinguished Teacher Award
- Dr. Elemir Simko: Pfizer Animal Health Award for Research Excellence
- Dr. Matthew Gaunt: Edward B. Bowers Recognition of Excellence Award
- Linda Hueller: Veterinary Technologist Teaching Award
- Dr. Karen Machin: Western Canadian Veterinary Students Association (WCVSA) Pre-clinical Professor of the Year Award
- Dr. Elemir Simko: Students of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Professor of the Year Award
- Michelle Evans: WCVSA Honourary President Award.

**TOP:** Second-year veterinary student Mangita (Gita) Gunson receives the Dr. Don Parslow Memorial Award from Dr. Stephen Manning of WCVM. **CENTRE:** Fourth-year veterinary student Allister Gray accepts the Western Canadian Association of Swine Veterinarians Award from Dr. John Harding of WCVM. **BOTTOM:** Second-year veterinary student Kathleen Wood accepts the Dr. Francis Hrudka Prize in Histology from Mark Hrudka, Francis' son.



**GORDON TAKES ON DIRECTOR'S ROLE:** Veterinary microbiologist **Dr. John Gordon** became director of the University of Saskatchewan Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture on November 1, 2007. Gordon, a professor of veterinary microbiology at WCVM, transferred to the university's College of Medicine with this new appointment.

As CCHSA director, Gordon will lead and develop the centre's interdisciplinary research group, define its future mission, model and promote its graduate training program, and conduct a program of independent research within its mandate.

The CCHSA is an interdisciplinary centre that engages in occupational medicine clinics, interdisciplinary research, and graduate training, as well as community outreach activities that link it to more than 25,000 farm families in Saskatchewan. For more information, visit [www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca](http://www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca).

### INTERPROVINCIAL AGREEMENT

**RENEWED:** In September 2007, WCVM's interprovincial agreement was renewed for another five years by all four western provinces.

The latest agreement, which expires in 2012, allows for increases in student enrollment quotas by any of the four provinces during the five-year period. Provinces evaluated all aspects of the document during the review process and input from those discussions produced some minor changes and updates.

The Interprovincial Agreement outlines the College's responsibility for providing undergraduate veterinary education to all four provinces. It also covers WCVM's commitment to supplying post-graduate training in a variety of clinical specialties, veterinary diagnostics and public health as well as other areas of veterinary science.

By signing the agreement, the provinces recognize the role that WCVM plays in providing veterinary expertise to western Canadians and its research contributions in biomedical and veterinary science. The agreement also recognizes WCVM's involvement in providing extension and continuing education for veterinarians, animal health technologists, and the residents of Western Canada.



Now more than 40 years old, the agreement continues to be a landmark document of interprovincial co-operation at the post secondary level in Canada.

**SPECIALISTS JOIN WCVM FACULTY:** In September 2007, WCVM gained two new faculty members with specialized knowledge in immunology, immunotherapeutics, vaccinology and vaccine development. Both professors are also part of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization's (VIDO) leadership team:

• **Dr. Volker Gerdts** has been appointed professor in WCVM's Department of Veterinary Microbiology. Gerdts is the associate director (research), at VIDO and an expert in neonatal immunization. A 1994 graduate of the Hanover Veterinary School in Germany, Gerdts completed his graduate studies at Germany's Federal Research Institute for Animal Health in 1997 before coming to VIDO in 1998 as a post-doctoral fellow.

• **Dr. Andrew Potter**, director and CEO of VIDO and Intervac, is another new professor in WCVM's Department of Veterinary Microbiology. Potter spent his undergraduate years at Carleton University and earned his PhD in microbiology in 1981 from the University of Otago in New Zealand. He joined VIDO as a research scientist in 1985, eventually becoming associate director (research) in 1994 and its director in 2007. An internationally recognized authority on vaccine development, Potter was involved in developing the world's first vaccine to protect food and water from *E. coli* 0157:H7. He was also the first to develop a licensed animal vaccine through the use of biotechnology.

**EARLY-MORNING HOMECOMING:** Early in the morning on September 13, WCVM Dean Dr. Charles Rhodes and other members of the Dean's Office

poured coffee and handed out fresh muffins to more than 200 students, faculty, staff, alumni and on-campus visitors.

The College's breakfast party was a warm-up for the University of Saskatchewan's Centennial Homecoming 2007 festivities that took place across campus and Saskatoon from September 14 to 16, 2007. Visit the U of S Homecoming site ([www.usask.ca/100/homecoming](http://www.usask.ca/100/homecoming)) to view photos and updates from the weekend's events.

**WCVM DONORS HONOURED:** WCVM donors **Heather Ryan** and **L. David Dubé** were among eight Saskatoon residents to be named "honoured supporters" of local non-profit organizations. The couple, along with six other honourees, received their certificates at a luncheon on November 15 — National Philanthropy Day — from the Saskatoon chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Ryan and Dubé were recognized for their commitment to funding world class veterinary research and supporting undergraduate students at WCVM. "They have contributed substantially to equine and companion animal research themselves and have established a matching fund program to leverage additional funds from other organizations and individuals," stated the College's nomination statement.

In August 2006, the Heather Ryan and L. David Dubé Foundation contributed \$1.07 million to WCVM's equine and companion animal health programs. The local residents also initiated a matching gift incentive program for the College's equine health research activities. The five-year program has the potential to raise an additional \$1 million for critical equine research projects at WCVM by 2011.



## White Coats and Stethoscopes

On September 28, the 73 members of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's Class of 2011 participated in the annual white coat ceremony during WCVM's fall awards program. As part of the ceremony, each first-year veterinary student received a personalized white lab coat from the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and a stethoscope from the provincial veterinary medical association in the student's home province.

As the regional college for Western Canada, all of WCVM's undergraduate students are residents of B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba or the North. One student who had to do some long-distance travelling to reach Saskatoon is Leia Cunningham of Pond Inlet, Nunavut (at right). The first-year student completed a Bachelor of Science degree at Concordia University in Montreal, Que., before beginning the DVM program at WCVM in August 2007. Cunningham's parents made the long trip south to proudly watch their daughter take part in the white coat ceremony and the reading of the Canadian Veterinary Oath.



# WCVM Research Program **THRIVES**

WCVM's research dollars have increased by a whopping 142 per cent in the past six years — just one of several statistics that demonstrate the health of WCVM's research program.



WCVM'S ANNUAL RESEARCH DOLLARS, 2001-2007

When the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's research wing opened its doors in 2007, the new facility introduced an exciting new era for the College's research program — along with some urgently-needed room for its scientists and graduate students.

But the total square footage of research-dedicated space hasn't been the only statistic on the rise at WCVM. Inside Dr. Norman Rawlings' office, the associate dean of research has a page full of figures and bar graphs that tell an exciting story: the College's research program is in the midst of a healthy growth spurt.

One of the most noticeable areas of growth is in research funding. Since 2001, WCVM's annual research dollars from public and private sources has increased from \$4.3 million to \$10.5 million in 2006-07. Here are some other statistics that reflect the health of WCVM's research program:

- In the past six years, WCVM's Tri-Council funding has increased by 134 per cent with the number of federally-sponsored grants nearly doubling from 12 to 22 awards. Tri-Council funding includes awards from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI).

- Research funding for food animal health-related projects has grown from nearly \$2.5 million in 2003-04 to \$3.4 million in 2006-07. During the same period, WCVM's research funding for wildlife-related projects more than tripled to \$5.1 million in 2006-07.

- In the field of comparative medicine, WCVM's research dollars jumped by 94 per cent in the past five years: public and private sources invested nearly \$1.39 million in comparative medicine projects in 2006-07.

- During the past five years, funding for equine health research increased by nearly 87 per cent to more than \$477,000 in 2006-07. Companion animal health research dollars rose to nearly \$257,000 last year — 2.5 times more funding than five years ago.

What's behind this positive research story? Rawlings believes it's a combination of factors: the introduction of new faculty with strong research interests, enhanced interprovincial funding for hiring new faculty, and new collaborative research positions based at the College.

"I think a lot of it can be attributed to a general increase in research activity among the College's faculty. Of course, it certainly helps to have highly-productive researchers like Drs. John Giesy and Monique Dubé — two of the university's Canada Research Chairs — as part of our faculty. But I think we're also seeing the success of newer faculty in acquiring research grants and the influence of new research positions that involve the College in collaborations across campus and across the country."

Rawlings points to new research positions like Dr. Sheryl Gow's on site position with the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Dr. Sarah Parker's role as the Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food

Research Chair in On-Farm Food Safety at the U of S. In 2007, WCVM also became home to two Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada scientists — Drs. Muhammed Anzar and Carl Lessard — who are part of the Canadian Animal Genetic Resources Program. The program is based at the University of Saskatchewan.

As WCVM's research program grows, so has its graduate student population. In 2006-07, the College had 135 graduate students enrolled in its graduate studies program — a 61 per cent increase in five years. One significant influence on this number was the growth of the graduate studies program in WCVM's Veterinary Biomedical Sciences — a department that's home to a number of faculty who are involved in the university's flourishing toxicology program.

To encourage even further growth of its graduate program, the College established the Graduate Education Enhancement Fund in 2007. This new endowment fund will offer a series of annual scholarships to graduate students, and it may also provide funding for specific equipment purchases and learning opportunities that will enhance graduate students' experiences at the College.

“As a means of increasing our graduate student numbers, we’re offering six annual scholarships worth \$8,000 each — half the amount of general scholarships offered by NSERC,” explains Rawlings. “Our goal is to challenge the graduate students’ supervisors to find matching funding through their departments or through other funding sources. If we give someone a full scholarship, then we’re only increasing our numbers by one. But if we work on the basis of providing half-scholarships, then it’s challenging the departments to come up with matching money.”

Rawlings adds that the new fund gives the College more flexibility in helping faculty members to attract exceptional graduate students who are being pursued by multiple educational institutions. “In those cases, we may be able to offer larger scholarships as an incentive for the students.”

The fund’s principal will be invested and the earned interest will pay for the fund’s annual scholarships and activities. The College will also solicit and accept gifts to support this new fund that will work to enhance WCVM’s graduate student community.

“There’s a great deal of enthusiasm revolving around our research program today, and I think the creation of this enhancement fund for graduate students will only help to increase our momentum in terms of attracting new people and financial resources for our future research efforts,” says Rawlings. **A**

*For more information about supporting the WCVM Graduate Education Enhancement Fund, contact Patti Tweed, the WCVM’s development officer (306-966-7450; patti.tweed@usask.ca).*



**ONE TO WATCH:** Veterinarian **Dr. Chelsea Himsworth** of Vancouver, B.C., was one of four outstanding graduates to receive Capilano College’s “One to Watch” Award in November 2007. The veterinarian completed her Associate of Science degree in 2003 at the B.C. college before coming to WCVM.

Capilano College’s award was created to recognize its young, high-achieving graduates — an ideal description for Himsworth. In June 2007, she earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree with Great Distinction and received the WCVM Faculty Gold Medal — the College’s highest honour for undergraduate students. “Dr. Himsworth was an outstanding student and an exemplary young professional. She’s a credit to our profession and to our College,” said WCVM Dean Dr. Charles Rhodes.

The award-winning veterinarian is now conducting graduate studies in veterinary diagnostic pathology at WCVM.

**ABOVE:** Dr. Chelsea Himsworth (centre) accepts a painting and certificate from Capilano College president Greg Lee and board chair Linda Robertson at the awards ceremony.



## 4 Questions for Helen Newton

**Helen Newton of Kelowna, B.C., is a fourth-year student at WCVM who served as president of the Students of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (SCVMA) in 2006-07. Newton answers four questions about her time as SCVMA president.**

### Q. What projects did the SCVMA Council work on last year?

We began a writing campaign to increase student interest in writing news or broad-based articles for the *Canadian Veterinary Journal*. We organized graduate ring sales for alumni through the CVMA site. Of course, we organized the annual SCVMA Student Symposium. Plus, we completed an annual graduate survey that gives people an impression of what it’s like to be a new veterinary graduate these days.

### Q. What were highlights for you?

I really enjoyed the CVMA animal welfare committee and our work on developing new position statements. I also attended the CVMA budget meeting, the CVMA committee weekend and the association’s annual conference — all really interesting experiences.

### Q. What did you gain from your time as SCVMA president?

It was a great learning experience to see how the CVMA works and how much the national association does for its members and the profession. I don’t think I would have known that without being involved, and I really tried to communicate that message to other WCVM students. It’s important to be a CVMA member because they truly represent us and our profession at a national level.

Another real benefit was the chance to meet veterinarians from all over Canada. I even had the chance to meet the American Veterinary Medical Association president and other American practitioners. Those links with people in the profession will really be beneficial when I’m looking for a job.

### Q. Speaking of jobs, what are your career plans after graduation?

I’d enjoy a mixed animal practice, but I like everything so I’ll see where the road takes me.

**Above:** Outgoing SCVMA president Helen Newton accepts the R.V.L. Walker Award from CVMA president Dr. Paul Boutet at the association’s annual conference in July.

**SETTLEMENT FUELS STUDIES:** One year after receiving \$768,630.59 through the largest class action distribution in Canada, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine has put part of its settlement share into three vital animal health research investigations.

The class action, which stemmed from the alleged price-fixing of vitamins, was initiated on behalf of direct purchasers, indirect purchasers and consumers of vitamins and vitamin products several years ago.

In 2005, the courts of Ontario, British Columbia and Québec approved a \$132-million settlement. In December 2006, the same courts decided to distribute the settlement money among charitable organizations, universities, research centres and various consumer associations and agencies.

Universities with veterinary medicine colleges were chosen to receive funds because of their connection to the agricultural sector — a major purchaser of vitamins or vitamin products. Based on legal guidelines, recipients must use the funding for activities related to vitamin products such as food and nutritional research and education.

In 2007, WCVM invited its faculty to apply for the new research funding. After a stringent review process, three research teams received \$418,200 in grants for large-scale, multi-year projects:

- All-trans retinoic acid (ATRA)-induced silencing of activated inflammatory cells (\$130,500 over three years): ATRA is a biologically active product of vitamin A metabolism that modulates inflammation. During the next three years, Dr. Baljit Singh and two graduate students in the Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences will explore ATRA's potential as a treatment for acute inflammation in dogs. The project involves a series of experiments using cell and molecular biology methods as well as quantitative real-time reverse transcriptase PCR — all technologies now available in WCVM's new research wing.

- Studying the role of microbial diversity in intestinal health through a swine gut model system (\$175,700 over five years): The beneficial effects of new diet ingredients, pre-biotics and therapeutic interventions are thought to be the indirect result of altering the intestinal microbial community structure.

Dr. Janet Hill and her research group in the Department of Veterinary Microbiology will investigate the diversity and dynamics of intestinal microbial communities by focusing on a specific family of organisms (enterococci) in the pig intestine. Their work in describing and measuring the effects of development and diet composition on the genomic diversity of enterococci will help researchers realize the potential of using the structure of intestinal microbial communities to indicate the effectiveness of nutritional strategies.

- Epidemiological study of trace minerals' impact on reproductive performance in Saskatchewan beef cow-calf herds (\$112,000 over two years): Copper deficiency has been implicated as a major cause of poor breeding outcomes on several Saskatchewan community pastures. However, no scientific data confirms that link, and there's very little information about the trace mineral status of cattle at the beginning of the breeding season.

In this study, Drs. Steve Hendrick, Cheryl Waldner, John Campbell and MSc student Dr. Leanne van de Weyer will test cows from community pastures across Saskatchewan to determine their trace mineral status before breeding and in the fall during pregnancy testing. The team will measure the impact of trace mineral deficiency on reproductive success — accounting for significant nutrition, infectious disease and environmental factors in the field. Findings will help researchers make future recommendations on trace mineral supplementation for western Canadian beef herds.



## Bench PRESS

**GRIZZLY BEAR RESEARCH CAPTURES AWARD:** WCVM graduate student **Dr. Johan Lindsjö** earned accolades for his research poster, "Evaluation of grizzly bear health in western Alberta," at the Wildlife Disease Association's 2007 conference. The annual conference took place in Estes Park, Colorado from August 12 to 17. Lindsjö, whose work is supervised by **Dr. Marc Cattet**, is a Master of Science student in WCVM's Department of Veterinary Pathology.

The WDA Student Poster Award acknowledges an outstanding student poster presentation detailing a wildlife disease or wildlife health research project that's presented at the WDA conference. For more details, visit [www.wildlifedisease.org/index.html](http://www.wildlifedisease.org/index.html).

**AQUATIC TOXICITY WORKSHOP AWARDS:** In early October 2007, two U of S graduate students took home a couple of high-profile research awards from the 34th annual Aquatic Toxicity Workshop in Halifax, N.S. The national meeting, which took place from September 30 to October 3, attracted about 500 environmental researchers and graduate students from across the country.

- PhD student **Amber Tompsett** received the best student platform presentation for her research entitled, "Gene expression and histological structure as biomarkers of chemical exposure in Japanese medaka."

- MSc student **Eric Higley** received the best student poster presentation for his research entitled, "Differential effects of environmental chemicals and selected pharmaceuticals on aromatase activity."

**Dr. John Giesy**, professor in WCVM's Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences and the University of Saskatchewan's Canada Research Chair in Environmental Toxicology, is the graduate supervisor for both students.

**DISTINGUISHED RESEARCHER DOUBLE-HEADER:** For the second time in a year, a WCVM graduate received the University of Saskatchewan's Distinguished Researcher Award. The latest recipient was **Dr. Jane Alcorn**, an associate professor of pharmacy in the University of Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy and Nutrition who received the honour at the U of S Fall Convocation on October 27.

Alcorn received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at WCVM in 1994, then went on to complete a PhD in pharmaceutical sciences at the University of Kentucky in 2002. She is now a gifted researcher and teacher in the field of pharmacokinetics (area of study that explores how medications and other bioactive materials work in the body).

**Dr. Gregg Adams**, a 1982 graduate of WCVM, received the university's Distinguished Researcher Award in June 2007. Adams is a professor and researcher in the veterinary college's Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences.

In honour of their Distinguished Researcher awards, both Alcorn and Adams presented public lectures in Saskatoon as part of Saskatchewan's annual Health Research Week in December 2007.

**SWINE RESEARCH FUNDING:** Dr. John Harding, an associate professor of swine production medicine at WCVM, has received \$25,000 in research funding from Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc. through the company's Porcine Circovirus Associated Diseases (PCVAD) Research Award program.

The WCVM researcher will use the money for a one-year study to determine whether immune capacity impacts porcine circovirus type 2 viral load and disease expression.

Through its research program, Boehringer Ingelheim also awarded \$50,000 to two PCVAD studies at Iowa State University.

**PAPER RECEIVES "HIGHLY CITED" DESIGNATION:** A research paper written by U of S Canada Research Chair Dr. John Giesy has been named a "highly cited paper" by an international scientific analysis resource. According to Thomson Scientific (ISI) *Essential Science Indicators*, an article entitled "Global distribution of perfluorooctane sulfonate in wildlife" is in the top one per cent of the most-cited papers during the last 10 years.

The original article, whose authors include Giesy and Kurunthachalam Kannan, was published in a 2001 issue of *Environmental Science and Technology* [35(7), 1339-1342, 2001]. To determine the "highly cited" designation, citations are counted from all sources and are gathered from the year of publication through the current year.

Giesy, a professor in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences, is the university's Canada Research Chair in environmental toxicology who is part of the U of S Toxicology Centre.

**FUNDING BOOST FOR EQUINE RESEARCH:** The generosity of western Canadian horse owners has helped WCVM raise an additional \$200,000 for equine health research during the first year of a unique matching gift incentive program.

Half of the funding — \$100,000 — came from more than 100 individuals, organizations and companies whose contributions "triggered" a successful match from the fund raising incentive during its first 12 months of operation. The second \$100,000 came from the Heather Ryan and L. David Dubé Foundation — the organization that initiated the matching gift incentive program in August 2006. The Foundation will provide up to \$100,000 per year in matching funds for five years. That gives WCVM the chance to raise an additional \$1 million for its equine health research activities by 2011. Dr. Norman Rawlings, WCVM's associate dean of research, especially commends the efforts of Patricia and Mark Du Mont — long-time supporters of the College's Equine Health Research Fund. In August, the couple from Aldergrove, B.C., donated more than \$75,000 to ensure that WCVM maximized the fund raising incentive's annual "match."

**For more information about the matching gift incentive program, visit [www.ehrf.usask.ca](http://www.ehrf.usask.ca) or contact Patti Tweed, WCVM's development officer ([patti.tweed@uask.ca](mailto:patti.tweed@uask.ca); 306-966-7450).**

**SUMMER SCIENTISTS:** Four presenters received \$100 awards for their exceptional posters during WCVM's annual undergraduate research poster session on September 13 and 14:

• **Allison Murray** (supervised by Drs. Gary Wobeser and Catherine Soos): Assessing the prevalence of avian influenza virus and seroprevalence of West Nile virus in a breeding colony of Franklin's gulls at Eyebrow Lake, Sask.

• **Ashley Ziegler** (supervised by Dr. Norman Rawlings): The effects of immunization against GnRH on FSH and LH secretion and follicular wave dynamics in anestrous ewes.

• **Jamie Rothenburger** (supervised by Dr. John Campbell): Environmental sampling for *Clostridium difficile*, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, and salmonella in Saskatchewan mixed animal veterinary clinics.

• **Matthew van Steelandt** (supervised by Dr. Gregg Adams): Does ovulation inducing factor in seminal plasma affect ovarian function in cattle?



**Dr. Janet Hill** of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine was among the Top Researcher Award recipients at the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation's annual Santé! Awards Dinner. Hill (above) accepted the award from Rob Norris, Saskatchewan's minister for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour on December 6 during the awards evening.

Hill, an assistant professor in the College's Department of Veterinary Microbiology, was the recipient of SHRF's Top New Investigator Establishment Grant (Biomedical) for her research efforts.

Hill is the third WCVM scientist to receive this province-wide annual award in the past three years. Drs. Ali Honoramooz and Lynn Weber of the College's Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences were the award's recipients in 2005 and 2006.

Hill will use her two-year, \$80,000 SHRF grant to develop new diagnostic tools for detecting different species of *Campylobacter* and their sources. As a common contaminant of food and water, *Campylobacter* infection is a leading cause of gastrointestinal disease in people. Hill is investigating the role of animals — particularly pets — in spreading *Campylobacter* infection.



# WCVM-SVMA June Conference



**25-YEAR REUNION:** In August 2007, 32 members of WCVM's Class of 1982 enjoyed a weekend filled with colourful stories, laughter and good times with their families during the class's 25-year reunion in Calgary, Alta. As part of the reunion, WCVM alumni organized a half-day "mini CE conference" that featured five educational seminars presented by Class of '82 members. "It was a unique way to learn from each other on a professional basis," says Dr. Jayne Takahashi, one of the weekend's organizers. The former classmates also gathered at the Calgary Zoo for a celebration dinner where a congratulatory message from WCVM Dean Dr. Charles Rhodes was part of the evening's presentations.

**CANWEST CONFERENCE:** In October 2007, WCVM Dean **Dr. Charles Rhodes** and development officer **Patti Tweed** joined representatives from the University of Calgary's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in hosting a reception at the 2007 CanWest Conference in Banff, Alta.

The event, which was held in the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, gave veterinarians a chance to meet former classmates and to hear about the growth of veterinary education in Western Canada.

**FLORIDA BREAK:** On January 20, WCVM graduates had another chance to meet Rhodes and other WCVM representatives in Orlando, Fla. The

WCVM alumni reception was part of the events at the North American Veterinary Conference.

**MEET YOU IN VEGAS:** The Dean is hosting a WCVM alumni reception during the 2008 Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas on February 18. The event takes place between 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. in the Mandalay Bay Convention Center North (Level O, Shell Seekers A).

*For more information about any WCVM alumni event, please contact Patti Tweed, WCVM's development officer (306-966-7450; [patti.tweed@usask.ca](mailto:patti.tweed@usask.ca)).*

## June 18-21, 2008 Saskatoon, Sask.

Once again, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association are joining together to present an outstanding continuing education opportunity in June 2008.

Did you know that today's workplace often includes employees from *four different generations*? Join your colleagues to hear international diversity consultant **Brian Sorge** from Chicago, Illinois, talk about generational traits and strengths. Attendees will have the opportunity to discuss their own experiences with gender and generational differences in the workplace.

The continuing education program for the 2008 June Conference also includes:

- **Bovine lameness wet lab** with Dr. Chris Clark, Large Animal Clinical Sciences, WCVM
- **Small animal radiology wet lab** with Dr. Susan Kraft, Colorado State University
- **Veterinary ethics** with Dr. Bernard Rollin, Colorado State University
- **Bovine genomics** with Dr. Denny Crews, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Centre, Lethbridge, Alta.
- **Applied immunology** with Dr. Chris Chase, South Dakota State University
- **Large animal disease investigation using "clicker" technology** with Dr. John Campbell, Large Animal Clinical Sciences, WCVM
- **Soft tissue surgery** with Dr. David Holmberg, Ontario Veterinary College
- **Small animal dermatology** with Dr. Kinga Gortel, Edmonton, Alta.
- **Emergency and critical care** with Dr. Jennifer Ogeer-Gyles, Small Animal Clinical Sciences, WCVM
- **Small animal post-operative rehabilitation** with Dr. Cindy Shmon, Small Animal Clinical Sciences, WCVM.

### PLUS

- SVMA annual general meeting
- Industry trade show
- Expansion tours and reception at WCVM
- Gala awards banquet with Juno award-winning singer-songwriter **Connie Kaldor**.

Visit [www.svma.sk.ca](http://www.svma.sk.ca) or [www.wcvm.com](http://www.wcvm.com) (under Seminars, News and Events) for more updates on the 2008 June Conference.

Check out *The Ark* on line at [www.wcvm.com](http://www.wcvm.com)

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