

State of the School Update from Dean Joan Hendricks

October 2006

With this second update on the State of the School, we begin the 2006 fall semester. It was my great pleasure to greet the incoming Class of 2010, and to welcome back the Classes of 2008 and 2009 (2007 is already in clinics—the next time they will be together is at Commencement!). Penn Vet is in the middle of many changes that affect each part of our threefold Teaching, Healing and Discovery mission.

Below, some of the news in the seven areas of: **people, resources, clinical news, upcoming events, information technology**, and **newly charged committees** to follow up on the Faculty Retreat.

1. People

Faculty—Recent faculty appointments, reappointments and promotions:

I am delighted to announce that three of our colleagues earned **promotions**:

- Dr. Serge Fuchs was promoted to associate professor of cell biology with tenure.
- Dr. Frank Luca was promoted to associate professor of cell biology with tenure.
- Dr. Pamela Wilkins was promoted to associate professor of medicine, clinician educator.

Four of our colleagues earned **reappointments**:

- Dr. Lillian Ruth Aronson was reappointed as assistant professor of surgery.
- Dr. Tracy L. Bale was reappointed assistant professor of neuroscience.
- Dr. Michael J. May was reappointed assistant professor of pharmacology.
- Dr. Alexander M. Reiter was reappointed as assistant professor of dentistry.

And these outstanding **new** colleagues have joined our ranks:

- Dr. William Beltran was appointed assistant professor of ophthalmology.
- Dr. Kendra Bence was appointed assistant professor of neuroscience.
- Dr. Jeleen Briscoe was appointed assistant professor of special species medicine and surgery.
- Dr. Peter Chapman was appointed assistant professor of medicine.
- Dr. Francis Golder was appointed assistant professor of anesthesia.
- Dr. Fiona Claire Hankenson was appointed assistant professor of laboratory animal medicine.
- Dr. Kurt Hankenson was appointed assistant professor of cell biology.
- Dr. Mary Lassaline was appointed assistant professor of ophthalmology.
- Dr. Sam Long was appointed assistant professor of neurology.
- Dr. Nicola Mason was appointed assistant professor of medicine.

- Dr. Philipp Mayhew was appointed to assistant professor of small animal surgery.
- Dr. Lila Miller was appointed as adjunct assistant professor of shelter medicine
- Dr. Allison Muller was appointed adjunct assistant professor of toxicology.
- Dr. Brian Murphy was appointed adjunct assistant professor of pharmacology.
- Dr. Mark Oyama was appointed associate professor of cardiology.
- Dr. JoAnn Slack was appointed assistant professor of large animal ultrasonography/cardiology.
- Dr. Denys Volgin was appointed research assistant professor of physiology.
- Dr. Sue Volk was appointed assistant professor of surgery.
- Dr. Raquel M. Walton was appointed assistant professor of clinical pathology.

Faculty Deaths

Sadly, we saw the passing of three dear friends and colleagues this year:

- Dr. Adelaide Delluva passed away May 31, 2006. She came to Penn in 1940 as a graduate student and became an instructor and assistant professor of biochemistry at Penn Medicine. In 1969, she came to Penn Vet as an assistant professor of biochemistry in the Department of Animal Biology. She served in many capacities, including acting chair of the Department of Animal Biology, head of the Biochemistry Section and associate dean of student affairs.
- Dr. William Medway, former professor of clinical laboratory medicine, passed away March 19, 2006. He came to Penn as an associate professor in 1958, conducting a number of studies on diseases of marine mammals, anemias in dogs and cats, malabsorption in Siamese cats and urinary mucopolysaccharides in dogs. He retired in 1988.
- Dr. Wayne Riser passed away June 26, 2006. In addition to being a professor of pathology, he is credited with introducing sterile surgery techniques as a regular practice in veterinary medicine. He was founder of the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals and the World's Small Animal Association. He retired from Penn Vet with emeritus status in 1979.

Faculty Research

What distinguishes Penn Vet from nearly all our peers is the extraordinary quality and impact of the research performed by faculty, students and staff. By nearly any standard, our scientists continue to contribute to a broad array of new discoveries, innovations and insights. The impact of our work is considerable and cannot be reduced to a short summary or even a readable listing, but I did want to provide just a few recent examples below:

- Dr. Ralph L. Brinster, the Richard King Mellon Professor of Reproductive Physiology, will be awarded the Gairdner Foundation International Award in October. Dr. Brinster is receiving the award for his “pioneering discoveries in germ line modification in mammals.”
- Dr. Peter J. Felsburg, professor of immunology, led a team of researchers that found a way to cure basset hound puppies of a deadly immune disorder, X-linked severe combined immunodeficiency. The disease also affects one in every 100,000 boys and

often proves fatal before the age of one. The procedure could be a more effective and more efficient treatment of the disease in the future.

- Dr. Peter Dodson, professor of anatomy, along with three former students, discovered five fossils in northwestern China that provide an important link between ancient and modern birds. The fossils indicate that early birds probably evolved in a watery environment and were similar to modern-day ducks or loons.
- Dr. David Artis, assistant professor of parasitology, was the senior author of a study whose findings showed how IL-25, a signaling protein known as a cytokine, prevents destructive inflammation and promotes immune responses associated with asthma and allergic responses. The study suggests that manipulating IL-25 could provide a method to treat a wide variety of chronic inflammatory diseases.
- Dr. Andrei Thomas-Tikhonenko, associate professor of pathology, was part of a research team that identified how molecules of microRNA are responsible for the growth of blood vessels in a model for human colon cancer. The process, called angiogenesis, results in the ability of ravenous cancer cells to recruit blood vessels and receive a steady supply of nutrients and oxygen. The findings suggest that these microRNAs might be a good target for future therapeutics to slow the growth of cancer cells.

Students

This fall we welcomed another outstanding class of first-year students. Applications last year were very high, and only about 12% of applicants were admitted, again making us one of the most selective veterinary schools in the country. There are 113 members of the Class of 2010, 86 of which are women, 27 men. As always, the majority are Pennsylvania residents; the rest come from 15 states and two countries other than the U.S. Pennsylvania students are participating in a letter-writing campaign to thank their legislators for the funding enabling the School to provide each PA student with a scholarship of \$4,200.

An innovative approach to orientation was introduced by the Office of Student Affairs: First-year students participated in leadership and team-building exercises designed to enhance their experience and, we hope, their interest and confidence in leading the profession as graduate veterinarians in a short four years.

Staff

Alumni Relations and Annual Giving Directors Named. Coreen Haggerty, the School's special events coordinator since July 2005, was recently appointed the new director of alumni relations. Mary Berger, formerly a gifts officer from Widener Law School, joined us on September 13 as our new director of annual giving.

School Receptionist Hired. Mattie Green, long the security guard at the entrance to the Rosenthal building, is now a University employee and continues to provide her warm, welcoming presence to the main entrance to the School.

Philadelphia Facilities Office Re-organized. To provide better service, Facilities operations will now be separate from Facilities Planning and Construction. The operational piece will

be headed by Chris Phillips and we are delighted to welcome architect Kim Kopple, who is moving to Penn Vet from the School of Medicine to head the planning and construction section.

2. Resources

The School's total Commonwealth appropriation increased to \$42,454,000. This increase was derived by an inflationary increase in the Veterinary Activities line of 3% and the addition of \$3.2 million in a new line entitled Center for Infectious Diseases. The Center is headed by Ed Pearce, who is including representatives across the School in deciding how best to direct the new resources.

Increased levels of donor support led to the successful conclusion of the "Building New Levels of Excellence" Campaign in June. This major achievement will be officially celebrated in November.

Facilities Updates

- The Vernon and Shirley Hill Pavilion. Named in honor of Vernon and Shirley Hill in recognition of their outstanding support of the School, the Hill Pavilion in Philadelphia is scheduled to open in November. It will be the new academic center of the School, containing five floors, including teaching and library space, research laboratories and a vivarium. The Hill Pavilion includes the latest technologies, enhancing the interaction between Penn Vet faculty and students. From state-of-the-art lecture halls and seminar rooms to wireless networking on the first and second floors, the building hosts a variety of innovative technologies. Lecture halls have integrated communications, media and Internet-based networks for digital collaboration and interactive presentations. The third and fourth floors will house modern research facilities; those on the third floor are designated for Penn Vet use and labs on the fourth will be occupied by faculty of Penn's Medical School. In 2011, the Vet School will take possession of the labs on the fourth floor.
- The Rosenthal Imaging and Treatment Center in Philadelphia. Made possible through the generosity of Gladys Rosenthal and her family, the new Rosenthal Imaging and Treatment Center (RITC) opens for business in early 2007. The new facility will offer megavoltage radiation and electron beam therapy, along with 3-D computerized treatment planning. The RITC will also have a 1.5 tesla MRI unit compatible with patient care and research needs. The Radiation Therapy service at Ryan is closed for patient therapy until the RITC opening.
- Special Species. The Special Species Ward is being remodeled and expanded in the Ryan Veterinary Hospital.
- New Bolton Center. Plans for a new isolation building, a colic barn and a chemical digestion facility are in progress at New Bolton Center. The isolation building will provide added biosecurity for the treatment of infectious disease, while the colic

barn is for the specialized treatment of horses with a variety of high-risk abdominal conditions. The chemical digestion facility will house a new technology that offers a safe and efficient means to dispose of infectious waste. Funding in the amount of \$12 million from the Commonwealth is available for this project.

3. Clinical News from Both Campuses

New training programs to enhance clinical/bench science interactions:

- Neurology combined residency/PhD to be investigated at BGS.
- Medicine two-year research experience option to be investigated as part of residency.
- CS-NBC residency-graduate study combined program to be investigated.
- Fourth-year students have been provided with text message beepers to improve communications on both campuses.

Philadelphia

- The Section of Special Species Medicine, formerly part of the Section of Surgery, is now the Section of Special Species Medicine and Surgery.
- The Section of Neurology is now the Section of Neurology and Neurosurgery.
- The Section of Ophthalmology, which was formerly part of the Section of Medical Genetics, is now a separate section.
- The Section of Surgery is working to create a “Center for Interventional and Minimally Invasive Surgery.”
- The Dental Service within the Section of Surgery was renamed to Dentistry and Oral Surgery Service.
- PACCA’s name has been officially changed to [Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society \(PAWS\)](#). Our students now rotate at PAWS two days a week and it is likely this will be increased to four days in the near future. These students are supervised by Dr. Michael Moyer, a newly appointed staff veterinarian and past president of the PVMA.

New Clinical Services (Philadelphia)

- The Penn Vet Center for Minimally Invasive Procedures, Endosurgery and Interventional Radiology at the Ryan Veterinary Hospital is now offering new and investigational laparoscopic and thoracoscopic procedures, as well as new and investigational endourologic procedures and investigational interventional radiology procedures.
- In July the Ryan Veterinary Hospital Emergency Service began offering rheolytic thrombectomy for treatment of certain blood clots in cats.
- Hemodialysis services will not be offered between November and May to allow Dr. Reid Groman to assist in the ICU, which is currently short staffed.

New Clinical Services (New Bolton Center)

- A full-time large animal ophthalmology service is being developed.

4. Upcoming School Events

Continuing education. “Veterinary Public Health in a Global Economy: The Livestock Revolution, Sustainable Development, Zoonotic Disease” will be held November 9 and 10 at the Annenberg Center. This conference will provide 12 clock hours of continuing education. Certificates will be issued at the completion of the Conference. This is free for students and half price for alumni. For more information, see the Conference’s page on our Web site, at www.vet.upenn.edu/vphconf/index.html.

5. Media Coverage

In addition to awards for some of our publications, Penn Vet received considerable positive coverage in the media.

- Dr. Dean Richardson and New Bolton Center continue to be featured in numerous local, national and international news accounts of the care of Kentucky Derby winner Barbaro. Watch for the up-coming edition of our own *Bellwether*, with the cover story, “It Takes a Team to Mend a Horse.”
- In addition, the Philadelphia *Inquirer* featured Penn Vet extensively in two recent articles, “Gender Gap in Animal Healthcare” and “Pet Care Extraordinaire.”
- Dr. Cindy Otto has been quoted extensively both in print and on TV about her study with the research and rescue dogs from 9/11.

6. Information Technology

- Instructional Technology. Classroom technology upgrades are going as planned for the Hill Pavilion. The IT group worked with students and faculty with the Computer Aided Learning program and video development of clinical practices and procedures. This new video library is available for students to stream over the Web before, during or after class. Wireless networking is across both campuses with comprehensive wireless coverage across many teaching and learning spaces. NBC will be getting similar technologies later this fall.
- Clinical Systems. Major developments in clinical systems include a financial systems upgrade to Widener with capabilities of distributed charge entry and management reporting. Another project toward an electronic medical records (EMR) system for the School is a picture archiving and communication system (PACS) and radiology information system (RIS). The first stage is to implement the RIS across both hospitals; our radiologists, IT staff and vendor are currently on schedule for a mid- to late October implementation. RIS implementation includes establishing a digital workflow across radiology departments at both hospitals. This change includes on-line forms, digital/voice dictation and other clinician workflow changes. PACS implementation at Ryan, currently set for November or early December, will begin immediately following RIS implementation. Another clinical systems project underway is a clinical lab/device review. Our consultant has developed an inventory of current lab systems and the workflows through labs and across device systems.

The next step is a “requirements” workshop with faculty to consider changes in workflow and device management. This workshop will then produce the requirements and recommendations for new systems. This review can be submitted for budget request and/or next or future-phase implementation of the EMR.

- Research Computing. Associate Dean for Research Phil Scott and Chief Information Office Ken McCardle recently met with a handful of faculty to assess their research database needs. They will meet with more faculty to gather a data-needs assessment. A recent IT group reorganization created two new positions focused on databases for clinical and research needs. One position will be along the lines of an “informaticist,” who can work closely with epidemiologists, biostatisticians, outside database groups and faculty and researchers to develop and manage databases. Next steps for this data-needs discussion include talking with Penn Vet hospital section chiefs and researchers.