

## 2007 SOS Summer Update

As the summer ends and six months remain before my next annual State of the School address, it seemed timely to provide some updates.

First, in early August there was a wonderful event led by Penn Vet: the combined Association of American Veterinary Colleges (AAVMC) and Summer Scholars Symposium in Washington, DC. This three-day meeting, focusing on increasing the number of veterinarians in biomedical research, began with a day of veterinary academic leaders (at all levels, from students to deans) and was sponsored by the National Cancer Institute as well as Penn Vet and the AAVMC. The next two days focused on students, trainees and young faculty involved in biomedical research—an annual event sponsored by Merck-Merial and NIH—and again co-sponsored this year by Penn Vet. **Dr. Mike Atchison**, director of Penn Vet’s Veterinary Medical Science Training Program (VMSTP) and his top-notch team (VMSTP coordinator **Michelle Darrah** and nearly [30 Penn Vet students](#) ) shone at every level: they provided transport, hospitality and logistical support, and were key to the presentations. In short, they made Penn Vet look wonderful (as, of course, we are!). Everyone should be very proud of these efforts.

As a wonderful bonus, **Dr. Frank Golder**, assistant professor of anesthesia, won the “Young Investigator Award” from among 26 applicants nationwide and five finalists. This marks the second consecutive year that a Penn Vet Scholar won this highly competitive and prestigious honor, since **Dr. Nicky Mason**, assistant professor of immunology, won last year.

I am committed to improving our teaching, research and clinical facilities. To that end, I want to let the Penn Vet community know that we have completed the conceptual master-planning exercise for New Bolton Center. It was an excellent exercise to clarify our long-term plans and get consensus on the best outlines for our facilities for the future. We will be presenting the resulting plans in many venues this fall including at the Fall faculty meeting. The parallel exercise will begin in Philadelphia shortly, and completed by the end of the calendar year. The process will be broadly inclusive and is essential so that our short-term investments in renovations are strategic and set the stage for long-term improvements.

Let me provide updates on two major new initiatives:

- [Penn Vet World Awards](#). I am receiving inquiries from students and also many congratulations from deans of other schools and industry leaders. The World Leadership in Animal Health Award, particularly, will elevate not just Penn Vet’s recognition, but the entire profession’s “brand” in the public’s eye. Please start thinking about whom you might wish to nominate—and or anyone we might have missed who is in a position to nominate someone for this first and most generous award ever given to a veterinarian. Former dean **Dr. Alan Kelly** will be leading a prestigious jury to evaluate the nominations for both the Penn Vet Student Inspiration and the World Leadership awards.
- Penn Vet, as everyone in this community knows, was founded out of Penn’s School of Medicine, and thus has always been a leader in the practice of Many Species, One Medicine™ (now our trademarked slogan!). A related concept—“One Health, One

Medicine, One World”—also is garnering attention and support rapidly, with both the AVMA and the AMA recently adopting proposals to promote this idea. “One Medicine” is the principle that learning about biology and disease in animals helps animals and people. “One Health, One World” emphasizes the recent recognition of a new level of support from the medical and veterinary communities, focusing not only on the fundamental similarities across species, but also on the urgent need to understand the importance of how disease spreads among species as well as food safety and animal production methods worldwide. Penn is taking a leadership role in both aspects. Some of the recent steps toward further advancing this initiative and planning for the future are the following:

- Penn is establishing a stem cell institute, led by Penn Vet and the School of Medicine, with partnership from the schools of Arts and Sciences and Engineering.
- Penn Vet is supporting a new Center for Public Health Initiatives that will provide coordinated support for the Masters of Public Health degree program and other public health initiatives. To learn more, visit [www.med.upenn.edu/cphi/](http://www.med.upenn.edu/cphi/).
- Center for Aging grants were provided to two joint projects between Penn Vet and School of Medicine Faculty.
- Dr. Arthur Rubinstein, dean of the School of Medicine, and I jointly will participate in a “One Medicine/One Health” symposium, together with such illustrious leaders as Drs. Lonnie King, Laura Kahn and Roger Mahr at the Philadelphia meeting of the American Society for Tropical Medicine in November. For more information check out [www.astmh.org](http://www.astmh.org).
- Pennsylvania Department of Health Secretary Dr. Calvin Johnson will be joining our Board of Overseers; State Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff is already a member.
- And, of course, the above-referenced meeting—supported by the National Institutes of Health, AAVMC, Merck-Merial and Penn Vet—was all about One Medicine/One Health.

### Public Veterinary Medicine Updates

As we move closer to finalizing our new Web site, we will have a link at the top labeled “Penn Vet Connects.” This will be a way to draw public interest to the many community outreach, public service and pro bono projects and services Penn Vet provides. Here is some new data on projects in this category:

- Student clubs were surveyed by **Mike Altmeier, V’09**, on their pro bono and community outreach endeavors. The list is extensive and ranges from toad banding to the World Rabies Day participation to Rural Area Veterinary Services to many good works by the Shelter Medicine Club. I am providing increased financial support to the Student Chapter of the AVMA for such activities.
- The PVMA, Penn Vet and Penn State University jointly are pursuing efforts to increase and improve service to agriculture, and will be presenting an overview to the Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission in December. We are highlighting our efforts to increase the number of food animal and rural vets, but also including innovative approaches to meeting the needs of farmers pioneered by **Dr. Dave Galligan, V’81**, professor of animal health

economics, and **Dr. Jim Ferguson, V'81**, professor of nutrition and chief of the Section of Nutrition and Animal Production Systems, to provide remote consultations and to train vets to be consultants to farmers.

- Our interactions with the W. B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences will be led by the Food Animal Club and **Dr. Nate Harvey, V'03**, starting with an evening information session at Saul and most likely including research projects led by Penn Vet students partnering with Saul students interested in dairy. The high school has outstanding teaching facilities for large animals, including dairy and beef, and is only about 20 minutes from Penn Vet.
- Our Shelter Animal Medicine Program continues to provide superb support to the Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society (formerly PACCA). We are also interested in working with other animal shelters in a fashion that provides both education to our students and assistance to the animals.
- The American SPCA National Outreach Committee visited Penn Vet. In addition to the ASPCA's formal support of the Shelter Animal Medicine Program for another two years, it is very interested in our innovative alternative animal productions systems program.
- Congratulations to the Penn Vet Animal Welfare Society for the strong showing on the Horse Welfare panel.
- The second annual Animal Arts Adventure Camp—jointly organized by Penn Vet's Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society and the University City Arts League—was once again a huge success.

### Announcements

I am not going to use this update to summarize the many achievements, events and staff announcements already noted on-line in [Rosettes and Ribbons](#) , but I do want to highlight a couple of upcoming major events:

- We are moving toward our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a School in 2009, and you will be hearing of events and asked for help in thinking of how we would like to celebrate!
- Please give any Commencement speaker recommendations—especially for 2009—to Cerie O'Toole at [cerieo@vet.upenn.edu](mailto:cerieo@vet.upenn.edu)
- Penn has selected Michael Pollan's thought-provoking book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, for its freshman reading project, a book uniquely pertinent to Penn Vet. We will be extending the University's initiative throughout the year to focus on a series of events, ranging from a scientific symposium focused on food and feeding, to brown-bag discussions among students, faculty and staff on the many controversies raised by the book. Stay tuned.