Dear VMD-PhD Alumni and Current Students,

This has been a great year for the VMD-PhD program at Penn. We had a fantastic applicant pool to the program, we interviewed nine students, and offered admission to four. All four accepted our offer. You will receive more information about this outstanding crop of incoming students in the Fall newsletter. In March we celebrated the Vet Student Research Day with a keynote by VMD-PhD alumnus Alex Travis, talks by VMD-PhD and VMD students, and numerous posters. Winners are listed inside this newsletter. In addition, in April another VMD-PhD alumnus, Stephanie Murphy, presented the Keynote at the Penn Zoobiquity Conference held at the Penn Perelman School of Medicine. We also have accomplishments by our alumni to report, and we present an update on current student publications and awards.

We are very proud of our alumni and current students, and hope that many of you will visit Penn during the coming year.

Wishing you the best in 2016,

Michael Atchison, Ph.D.
Director, VMD-PhD Program

We will be updating our alumni pages. Please let us know updates and changes.

http://www.vet.upenn.edu/education/academics-and-training/vmd-phd-program/vmd-phd-alumni-profiles

Find your profile and send us feedback!

http://www.vet.upenn.edu/education/academics-and-training/vmd-phd-program
VMD-PhD Admissions

We had a fantastic admissions season this year and choosing the best out of an impressive group of strong applicants was challenging. Ultimately we made four offers, and all four students accepted giving us a very strong incoming class.

The quality of our applicant pool is outstanding. Applicant averages for this year were GPA of 3.62 and GRE scores of 160 (V) and 158 (Q) with our matriculating students averaging GPA of 3.74 and GRE scores of 164 (93%; V), 163 (85%; Q), and 5.0 (91%; A). All had extensive research experience and outstanding letters of recommendation attesting to their abilities as scientists.

Incoming Students for Fall 2016

We are very pleased with our incoming crew of students. Their names, graduate groups, and undergraduate institutions are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Graduate Group</th>
<th>Undergraduate Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaclyn Carlson</td>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
<td>Cornell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip Hicks</td>
<td>Cell and Molecular Biology</td>
<td>U. Delaware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Sotuyo</td>
<td>Neurosciences</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Vanderbeck</td>
<td>Immunology</td>
<td>Haverford</td>
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More information on our incoming class will be in the Fall newsletter.

December Dinner Party at the program director’s home.
CURRENT STUDENT AWARDS

The Phi Zeta Student Research Day highlights veterinary student research at Penn. The day includes a keynote address by a prominent veterinarian-scientist, talks by VMD-PhD students, talks by VMD students, and student posters. Speakers were chosen from a large pool of abstracts and winners amongst our current VMD-PhD students are listed below.

Our keynote speaker this year was VMD-PhD alumnus Dr. Alexander Travis. Alex gave an outstanding talk entitled: “Following Your Science – From Sperm to Stroke and From Basic to Bedside”.

Alex also spent some time meeting with current students in the program.

VMD-PhD student presentation winners were:

**First Place: Bailey Baumann**

*Advisor: Josh Dunaief MD/PhD, Department of Ophthalmology, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania*

*Title: The Effect of Muller Cell Dysfunction on Iron Transport Across the Neurosensory Retina.*

**Second Place: Feini Qu**

*Advisor: Robert Mauck, Ph.D., Department of Bioengineering, School of Engineering*

*Title: A Low-cost, Wearable Magnet-based Detection System to Assess Joint Kinematics in Humans and Large Animals.*

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Third Place: Elinor Willis

Advisor: Scott Hensley, Ph.D., Microbiology, Wistar Institute.

Title: Neonates Generate Long-lived Protective Immune Response in the Presence of Maternal Antibodies.

Thesis Defenses

Student: Feini Qu
Date: October 28, 2015
Title: Biomaterial-mediated Reprogramming of the Wound Interface to Enhance Meniscal Repair
Mentor: Robert Mauck
Bioengineering

Student: Rebecca Evans
Date: November 16, 2015
Title: T Cell Immunosurveillance of Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma
Mentor: Robert Vonderheide
CAMB CB
Graduating VMD-PHD Students

Erika Lin-Hendel
CAMB Developmental, Stem Cell, and Regenerative Medicine
Mentor: Dr. Stuart Anderson and Dr. Jeffrey Golden

Erika’s thesis work demonstrated a link between mitochondrial metabolism with interneuron migration during development, which has implications in our understanding of neurological disorders such as epilepsy and autism. After graduation she will be working in agricultural research in global industry with the Austrian company Biomin.

Richard Jimenez
CAMB Genetics and Gene Regulation
Mentor: Richard Schultz

Richard’s research explored the role of maternal SIN3A in the reprogramming of gene expression during mouse preimplantation development. After graduation Richard will be performing a Small Animal Rotating Internship with a VCA hospital in Maryland.

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Student Publications, Honors, Awards

Oliver Wilson Calhoun was born at 1:08 pm on Dec 2, 2015: 8 lbs 8oz, 22 inches long!

Student Publications (2015-2016)


http://www.vet.upenn.edu/education/academics-and-training/vmd-phd-program


Alumni Awards, Accomplishments, and Honors

Congratulations go out to all of our alumni listed below

**Stephanie J. Murphy, VMD, PhD, (1996) DACLAM, Director of the Division of Comparative Medicine, Office of Research Infrastructure Programs, Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives, Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health.**

As part of ORIP’s strategic goals to promote MD/DVM collaborations, Dr. Stephanie Murphy, Director, Division of Comparative Medicine, ORIP, gave the keynote presentation, entitled “Comparative Medicine: Challenges and Opportunities,” for the 2016 Zoobiquity Conference held at the University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA on April 2, 2016. The annual Zoobiquity Conference is designed to bring together leading clinicians and scientists in both human and veterinary medicine to discuss the same diseases in a wide spectrum of animal species and human beings. The intention of this cross-disciplinary conference is to create conversations and relationships between human and veterinary colleagues confronted with similar clinical challenges. Dr. Murphy’s presentation provided conference participants with a better understanding of what comparative medicine is and how it serves as a bridge between human and veterinary medicine as well as the challenges and opportunities facing comparative medicine.

**Marnie FitzMaurice, VMD, PhD (1996, 2002)**
**Lecturer in Biomedical Sciences**
**Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine**

Last summer Marnie took on the position of Director of Veterinary Curriculum at Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine. In addition to this new role, she will continue as a Lecturer in Biomedical Sciences, teaching in the anatomy, neuroanatomy and physiology courses of the preclinical curriculum.

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Bruce Smith VMD, PhD (1988, 1993)  
Professor of Pathology  
Scott-Ritchey Research Center  
Auburn University

Bruce recently published a paper in his new, very part-time role as a professor of Brewing Science in Auburn University’s Brewing Science and Operations Program. The paper is entitled “The Impact of Yeast Genomics on Brewing” and can be found online at: http://www.omicsonline.org/nutrition-food-sciences-abstract.php?abstract_id=66512

Todd Strochlic, VMD, PhD (2008)  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
College of Medicine, Drexel University

Todd received a one-year $65,000 CURE (Commonwealth Universal Research Enhancement) grant from the PA Department of Health. The title of the project is: The role of MK2 kinase signaling in inflammatory breast cancer.
Sarah L. Ralston, VMD, PhD (1982)
Professor, Department of Animal Sciences
Rutgers University

In the past year Sarah has had several new refereed publications:


Invited Reviews:

Research Abstracts:
Silva RFP, Rezende ASC, Saliba EOS, Maruch S, Ignacio DFS, Santiago JM, Pereira LFL, Ralston SL. Comparison of digestion in dewormed and not dewormed mares. Proc. 52nd Annual Meeting of Soc. Brasileira de Zootechnia, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil, July, 2015.
Upcoming Events

NIH/Merial Program Trip to NIH: June 15-16  
Merial-NIH Veterinary Scholars Symposium: July 28-31  
Trip to Philadelphia Science Center: June 30  
Panel discussion with alumni: July 6  
Combined Degree Retreat: August 3  
Welcome Night Out for Incoming Students: TBD

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We want to know....
New position, promotion, patent, publication, life event, etc.? Please share your news! vmstp@vet.upenn.edu

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