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# floridaveterinarian

THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE MAGAZINE

## RAPID RESPONSE

UF plays key role in  
managing new dog flu  
emergence

### Upcoming Events

- Sept 30**  
College of Veterinary Medicine Homecoming Event
- Oct. 7**  
UF Homecoming
- Oct. 19-22**  
Florida Association of Equine Practitioners Conference and Alumni Gathering, Naples
- Oct. 22**  
Team Vet Med 20th Anniversary Bike Ride/Horse Farm 100
- Nov. 4**  
Dean's Circle of Excellence Clinical Skills Showcase (invitation only)

- Nov. 4-6**  
American College of Veterinary Pathology Conference and Alumni Reception, Vancouver
- Nov. 17-20**  
American Association of Equine Practitioners and Alumni Reception, San Antonio
- Nov. 30-Dec. 2**  
Gulf Atlantic Veterinary Conference and Alumni Gathering, Boca Raton
- Feb. 2-7**  
NAVC VMX Conference 2018 and Alumni Reception, Orlando

- Feb. 5**  
Dean's Circle of Excellence Luncheon at NAVC VMX Conference (invitation only)
- April 21**  
Annual UF College of Veterinary Medicine Open House, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- May 26**  
Commencement



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# floridaveterinarian

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### On the cover

After diagnosing a strain of canine influenza not previously reported in Florida, UF took the lead statewide in providing information to veterinarians, clients and key stakeholders. (Photo by Mindy C. Miller)



## Greetings!

I hope everyone had a wonderful and rewarding summer. Although the focus of our work shifts a bit during summer, we never stay still at the college. When you read this, fall will be upon us with all it brings related to the launch of a new academic year. Before we get distracted by all of that activity, I wanted to bring you up to date on the latest happenings at the college.

First, however, I want to congratulate our newest DVM alumni, members of the Class of 2017, who tipped their regalia cap tassels to the left at commencement on May 27 and have entered the next exciting phases of their lives as veterinarians. As with each new cohort of Gatorvet alums, we know this group of graduates will certainly make the world a better place, and we wish each of them the very best.

## Now for a few highlights from recent months:

### Faculty

Our latest preeminence-initiative faculty hire is Dr. Sal Frasca, an aquatic veterinary pathologist who has joined our new department of comparative, diagnostic and population medicine. We are proud to have him on board and know his expertise will complement our existing programs in exciting ways. In addition, we have five new positions, all tenure-track, to substantially expand the portfolio of diagnostic services we offer. In collaboration with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, this growth will be designed to effectively complement those services currently offered by FDACS labs. As we continue on our path to national prominence, our new diagnostic-oriented faculty members will be considered teacher-scholars, who will strengthen the college's depth by building on the solid research foundation we have established.

### Scholarship Funding

Since 2015, the college has raised \$16 million in new funding for scholarships in a blend of cash, pledges and estate gifts. This year, we will be providing more than \$800,000 to UF veterinary medical students in scholarship support. In this issue, you'll find a story that provides more information about the progress we are making with our UF Veterinary Access Scholarship program.

### Administration

I'm happy to share the news that we have hired Dr. Juan Samper as our new associate dean for academic and student affairs. We have a story about Dr. Samper's appointment in this issue, but I can tell you he will be an excellent leader and mentor to our veterinary medical students as well as an excellent addition to our executive leadership team.

In other administrative developments, the college's newest academic department, the department of comparative, diagnostic and population medicine, became official on July 1. The department formerly known as infectious diseases and pathology is now named infectious diseases and immunology, and we have had various faculty throughout the college change departmental affiliations to better align with their academic programs and interests. The addition of the fifth department should strengthen inter-college collaborations and better position us to pursue growth in key areas, such as diagnostic services and One Health.

### Research

We continue to set new records with our research grants and contracts, with our total awards of \$23 million this past FY representing a 30 percent increase over the previous year. Dr. Ammon Peck will be stepping down from his position as associate dean of research and graduate studies at the end of December and we will be conducting a search for his replacement. Our research and graduate programs have thrived under Dr. Peck's leadership and we greatly appreciate his commitment and service to the college.

### Education

We continue to move the needle in terms of attracting strong applicants to our D.V.M. program. As news spreads of the exciting programs we offer here at UF and our innovative learning opportunities, we continue to draw interest from a solid pool of applicants with interest in many different aspects of veterinary medicine. This issue features a story about one of our new graduates, Dr. Kelly Hurley, and how scholarship support allowed her to pursue her interest in global veterinary medicine.

### Patient Care

Caseload in our small and large animal hospitals continues to increase. As a reflection of this, we are facing a need to expand our facilities once again. Plans are underway for an expansion of the small animal hospital later this year to better accommodate and organize staff offices and free up areas to be allocated for patient care.

### Development

Our fundraising efforts are going extremely well as we have set yet another record this year. A total of \$34.3 million was generated to support scholarships and various other college programs. This puts us on a great path toward achieving our goals for the upcoming UF capital campaign. Our college campaign will focus on student experience, faculty excellence and One Health, and you'll be hearing more about our progress in all of these areas in the months to come.

Karen Legato, our longtime executive director of advancement has retired from the college after nearly 18 years of service. We greatly appreciate all of her efforts in cultivating not just dollars and programmatic support through philanthropic gifts, but also in helping to build and maintain positive relationships with many different stakeholders. We wish Karen all the best as she begins this new chapter of her life.

### Communications

Our ongoing public relations and marketing efforts received national recognition this spring when Sarah Carey, our director of communications, was selected as the recipient of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges' 2017 Excellence in Communications Award.

Sarah was presented with the award during the Association of Veterinary Advancement Professionals annual conference in Indianapolis in July. She and I were able to provide an overview of what the college has accomplished this past year, specifically tied to our efforts to promote the 40th Anniversary, and how we are making use of targeted marketing efforts, including our new anthem video, to advance the UFCVM's national reputation. The video, which was very well received at the conference and at our American Veterinary Medical Association alumni reception, can be found on our website at [vetmed.ufl.edu](http://vetmed.ufl.edu).

**As always, I appreciate your feedback and support. Please don't ever hesitate to contact me for more information about what your college of veterinary medicine is doing or with your ideas regarding how we can continue to improve and grow.**

### Go Gators!

James W. Lloyd, D.V.M., Ph.D.  
Professor and Dean  
UF College of Veterinary Medicine

## POTENTIALLY LETHAL RAT LUNGWORM PARASITE FOUND THROUGHOUT FLORIDA

Story by Natalie van Hoose

University of Florida researchers have found rat lungworm, a parasitic nematode that can cause meningitis in humans and animals, in five more Florida counties, two years after the parasite was originally discovered in South Florida.

Rats and snails in Alachua, Leon, St. Johns, Orange and Hillsborough counties tested positive for the parasite, according to a study in PLoS ONE by researchers in the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and the Florida Museum of Natural History.

This study sheds new light on the extent of the parasite's geographic range in Florida, said Heather Stockdale Walden, Ph.D., an assistant professor of parasitology at the college.

"The parasite is here in Florida and is something that needs to be taken seriously," she said. "The reality is that it is probably in more counties than we found it in, and it is also probably more prevalent in the southeastern U.S. than we think. The ability for this historically subtropical nematode to thrive in a more temperate climate is alarming."

In a survey of 18 counties, nearly 23 percent of rats, about 16 percent of rat fecal samples and nearly 2 percent of land snails tested positive for the nematode.

Climate change could trigger further spread of rat lungworm as average temperatures rise, helping the tropical parasite thrive and likely expanding its range, said study co-author John Slapcinsky, collections manager of invertebrate zoology at the Florida Museum.

"We expected the range of this nematode to be restricted to one part of the state because it's primarily a tropical species," he said. "But being within another organism could mean it's less impacted by cold weather."

While snails live most of their lives within a small area, they can easily be transported on cargo containers and in potted plants, which is probably how the parasite first arrived in Florida, he said.

Slapcinsky also noted rat lungworm "doesn't seem to be picky" about the species of snails it infects and could threaten native snail populations. In addition to finding the parasite in three non-native snail species, the research team detected the parasite in three native species: the Florida amber snail, *Succinea floridana*; the perforate dome snail, *Ventridens demissus*; and the quick gloss snail, *Zonitoides arboreus*.

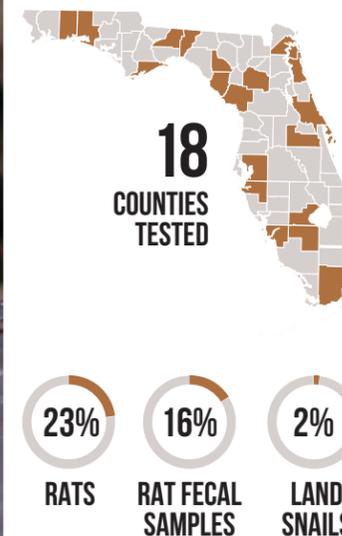
"There are a lot of snail species endemic to South Florida that don't occur anywhere else, and the last thing you want to do is throw one more problem their way," he said. "Rat lungworm is finding a whole new pool of animals to infect. The more species it infects, the larger its population can be, which could make transmission even easier."

Snails ingest rat lungworm larvae by eating infected rat feces. When a rat eats an infected snail, the larvae penetrate the rat's intestine and enter its circulatory system, which transports them to the brain. There, they develop into immature worms, re-enter



Photo courtesy of John Slapcinsky

## TESTED POSITIVE FOR THE NEMATODE



the circulatory system and travel to the rat's pulmonary artery, where they mature and reproduce. When new larvae hatch, they are coughed up and swallowed by the rat and pass through its feces, completing the life cycle.

Humans can ingest the parasite by consuming infected snails or infected frogs and crustaceans, which can also pick up the nematode.

Walden said more than 2,800 cases of human rat lungworm infection have been documented worldwide since the parasite was described, but the actual number of cases is likely greater as the disease can go undetected or be misdiagnosed.

While no human cases of infection with rat lungworm, or *Angiostrongylus*, have been reported in Florida, eating lungworm-infected snails killed a white-handed gibbon at Zoo Miami in 2003 and a privately owned orangutan in Miami in 2012.

Several steps can help lower the risk of infection, Walden said.

"Wash produce," she said. "Some snails are very small and can easily hide in lettuce

leaves. Teach children not to eat snails, and if they handle snails, make sure they wash their hands.

Be aware of the potential risks associated with eating snails and also raw or undercooked frogs and crustaceans."

Infection with rat lungworm can also cause meningitis in animals, as well as limb weakness or paralysis, neck pain and central nervous system problems.

To protect pets and livestock, be mindful of snails in animals' living space, Walden said. Check watering troughs for snails that might have fallen in and monitor animals for snail-eating habits.

"If you have questions about your pet, contact your veterinarian and discuss your concerns," she said.

Managing rat populations could help curtail the parasite in facilities that house animals, such as zoos and conservation centers, she said.

...

### ABOVE:

The rat lungworm parasite is being found in an increasing number of snail species in Florida.

### OPPOSITE:

Dr. Heather Walden and John Slapcinsky inspect a snail at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

**"THE PARASITE IS HERE IN FLORIDA AND IS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY."**

— Heather Stockdale Walden, Ph.D.



Photo by Mindy C. Miller

## RESEARCHERS: BRAIN COMMUNICATION LINKED TO CHANGES IN GUT MICROBIOTA

Story by Sarah Carey

**Scientists at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine have linked brain communication to immune system response in the gut, a finding that could have implications for the treatment of many immune and neurologic diseases as well as for diseases of the gastrointestinal tract.**

The gastrointestinal tract helps regulate the host immune system throughout a lifetime and a large number of diseases involve dysfunction of the GI tract as well as the immune system, said Dr. Jasenka Zubcevic, an assistant professor of physiological sciences at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, the study's senior author. However, there are many autoimmune diseases where the gut has not been recognized as a contributing factor.

"The gut is a forgotten immune organ. It's so vast and really does affect a lot of our immune system development from a very early age," Zubcevic said.

To investigate the brain's effects on the gastrointestinal tract, Zubcevic and her colleague, Dr. Chris Martyniuk, an associate professor of physiological sciences at UF, used a novel mouse model to show that simply by manipulating one variable — communication with bone marrow cells — they were able to see a change in the make-up of gut bacteria.

By suppressing the brain's neural inputs into the bone marrow, the scientists found a corresponding suppression of inflammation and a shift to beneficial bacteria in the gut.

"The immunosuppression was associated with beneficial effects on the microbiota, or the microorganisms, found within the GI tract of the mice used in our study," said Martyniuk, who also is associated with UF's Center for Environmental and Human Toxicology.

"We had more of what could be considered a beneficial bacterial environment and less of those type of bacteria considered particularly pathogenic," he added. The findings

were published April 12 in *Frontiers in Physiology*.

The researchers said they were intrigued at the thought of studying the relationship between the brain, the gastrointestinal tract and immune system diseases, and adapted an existing mouse model for this particular purpose.

"We are very interested in how the brain controls the immune system, and how the immune system responses subsequently impact the overall physiology of the body," said Zubcevic.

Although emerging evidence has recently shown the association between microbial imbalances in the gut and neurogenic diseases and conditions such as hypertension, sleep apnea and anxiety, the complex interplay between the brain and gut microbiota makes it difficult to determine cause-effect relationships in disease, which subsequently hinders efficient treatment, according to the study.

"People already know that gut bacteria will affect the immune system, but now we've shown the reciprocal — that by manipulating the host immune system we can affect the gut's microbiota," Zubcevic said. "The fact that there is this interplay between the gut and the immune system is of huge interest to us and a very exciting finding."

Other scientists from the UF veterinary college, the UF College of Medicine and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences collaborated in the study. Tao Yang, Ph.D., the lead author, was a graduate student in Zubcevic's laboratory and the research was part of his thesis project.

■■■

**"We're very interested in how the brain controls the immune system."**

— Jasenka Zubcevic, Ph.D.



Dr. Chris Martyniuk, Dr. Jasenka Zubcevic and Dr. Tao Yang are shown in Zubcevic's laboratory. Yang's doctoral research formed the basis of the study of gut-brain-immune system relationships that the three collaborated on at UF.



# RAPID RESPONSE

UF PLAYS KEY ROLE IN MANAGING  
NEW DOG FLU EMERGENCE

Story by Sarah Carey  
Photos by Mindy C. Miller

When about a dozen sick dogs admitted to the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's Small Animal Hospital in late May were diagnosed with a strain of highly contagious canine influenza virus – the first-ever outbreak of the virus in Florida – college officials sprang into action to alert veterinarians and pet owners throughout the state.

Experts at the college, including an assistant professor who discovered the virus more than a dozen years ago, took the lead in a response that provided important details about the virus strain known as H3N2 while debunking misinformation that was gaining traction online and elsewhere. They once again demonstrated why the college is the go-to source of reliable information and strategies when a crisis occurs among Florida's animal population.

While the outbreak has retreated from the headlines, veterinarians around the state are still grappling with its effects.

"The state of Florida now has 100 confirmed H3N2 canine influenza cases representing dogs from 12 Florida counties," said infectious disease specialist Cynda Crawford, D.V.M. ('89), Ph.D. ('84), who co-discovered the original canine influenza virus, known as H3N8, in 2004. "Florida has the largest number of cases compared to other states at this time, and at this time there are 15 states with confirmed cases."

No dogs treated at UF have died, but multiple deaths associated with H3N2 canine influenza have been reported elsewhere in the state.

"The Maddie's Shelter Medicine program at UF is currently assisting the Pet Alliance shelter in Orlando with its H3N2 situation, which involves 49 affected dogs," Crawford said. "We are providing diagnostic testing to determine when each dog is safe to release from isolation."

Crawford said the fact that more cases are being diagnosed and treated in Florida and elsewhere shows the level of awareness for veterinarians, dog owners and dog show participants and organizers has greatly increased.

"Several entities have done a very good job at providing information and awareness to veterinarians and dog owners as well as to the public," Crawford said. "In addition to what we have done at UF, Florida's state veterinarian has provided information to other state veterinarians and various veterinary

medical associations have helped to spread the word in different states, along with the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Kennel Club.”

Soon after UF veterinarians diagnosed the first patients with the virus strain H3N2, responsible for a major 2015 outbreak in the Midwest, veterinary administrators held a hospital-wide meeting to update all employees. Hospital workers with any potential of exposure to ill patients were required to conform to strict biosafety protocols to reduce the risk of contamination within the hospital. Patients diagnosed with or suspected of having the virus were separated from other hospital patients at admission and were cared for in another building with secure access. Officials even offered a vaccine clinic for its own employees, providing faculty, staff and students with the opportunity to have their dogs vaccinated against the H3N2 virus.



Instrumental in putting on the vaccine clinic were members of the college's Primary Care and Dentistry Service, led by Amy Stone, D.V.M. ('99), Ph.D. ('02).

Although initially the confirmed cases were dogs that had participated in specific dog shows, or dogs exposed to such dogs — and officials believe that show dogs were involved in the spread of H3N2 from state to state — later cases were believed to have contracted the virus at boarding facilities.

In addition to caring for the affected dogs and working with the state's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to get the word out, when the outbreak was first discovered, the college held a news conference on June 1 featuring Crawford, who responded to questions through a Facebook Live interview that drew national press coverage.

Crawford said she was proud that following UF's widely disseminated newscast, other states followed suit in distributing news reports focusing on H3N2.

## “ THIS NEW VIRUS IS SORT OF REPEATING A PATTERN OF SPREAD THAT THE ORIGINAL VIRUS SHOWED. ”

— Cynda Crawford, D.V.M.

“The media do play an important role in putting out accurate information to people who need to know about this highly contagious disease,” she said.

Crawford said there had been many lessons learned since when she discovered the original canine influenza virus 13 years ago. Both viruses were new to dogs in the U.S. during their respective time periods and quickly spread to thousands of dogs in many states.

“What's interesting to me is that H3N2 has been in Southeast Asia since 2006, and then appeared in the U.S. in 2015. Because dogs do not have immunity to

this virus, it has quickly spread through thousands of dogs in 30 states prior to this recent situation with show dogs,” she said.

“This is very much a pattern that we identified between 2004 and 2009 with the first canine influenza virus,” Crawford added. “It was new in this country, dogs didn't have any immunity to it, it was highly contagious and it spread through the movement of infected dogs to more than a dozen states and thousands of dogs in the first five years. So, this new virus is sort of repeating a pattern of spread that the original virus showed.”

The bottom line for dog owners is that they should vaccinate their animals, Crawford said.

“All dogs should get the canine flu vaccine unless there is some contraindication,” she said. “Dogs that stay home and have their own yard and walk around the block are probably the lowest-risk group, but what if there was a need for emergency boarding and the facility requires that vaccine? We're a dog-loving nation that needs to take our dogs everywhere, so most dogs have at least some category of a social lifestyle. And if dogs are social, they're at higher risk.”

Information about canine influenza for veterinarians and pet owners can be found on the UF College of Veterinary Medicine website.



Sylvia Tucker, a biological scientist at the college, looks on as Dr. Cynda Crawford inspects samples that had recently tested positive for H3N2 dog flu.



Dr. Cynda Crawford, a 1989 graduate of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, is a leading expert on canine influenza virus and co-discovered the dog flu strain that first emerged in Florida greyhound dogs in 2004.

# HELPING PEOPLE BY HELPING ANIMALS

*For New Alumna Kelly  
Hurley, Two Degrees  
Make One Health*

**Story by** Linda Homewood  
**Photos by** Mindy C. Miller

## NEW ALUMNI PROFILE

**New alumna Kelly Hurley, D.V.M., M.P.H., graduated from the UF College of Veterinary Medicine in May with two degrees granted through the joint Doctor of Veterinary Medicine/ Master of Public Health program.**

It was her love of animals that first shaped her educational path. She recalled, as a child, being encouraged to become a veterinarian because of that love. But later, as she studied and explored veterinary medicine in college, she began to understand how closely animal health is intertwined with human health and the environment.

Hurley's journey leading to dual animal and human health degrees seems almost predestined. Her bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University was in veterinary and biomedical sciences. She also minored in wildlife and fishery science and in German.

Her father's career as a medical doctor also influenced her interest in health and medicine. She recalled early years exploring the world, traveling with her family to other countries, sometimes related to health care. Her father later took a position through Indian Health Service, providing much needed medical care to a Native American tribe in South Dakota.

Given her early experiences, it was not surprising that as an undergraduate, Hurley chose to study wildlife medicine in southern Africa for a study abroad program. She also met her husband, Derek Hurley, falling in love with him and with the African continent.



“  
**MY DREAM WAS TO BE A WILDLIFE  
 VET IN AFRICA ...**  
 ”

— Kelly Hurley, D.V.M., M.P.H.

Finding a veterinarian mentor for an internship in Africa was an arduous task due to policies and potential risks, as well as the time commitment required of busy practitioners. Hurley was pleased to be accepted by Mark Jago, M.A., VetMB., a Cambridge-trained veterinarian with the Republic of Namibia Ministry of Environment and Tourism, who was known for his work in conservation and public health. She was surprised to learn Prince Harry had worked with Jago the year before on an initiative to protect endangered rhinos, keeping them safe from poachers.

Hurley describes her overarching role in veterinary medicine as helping people by helping animals.

“Whether it’s strengthening the human-animal bond, preventing transmission of zoonotic diseases, which ultimately affects people, or helping livestock which contributes to human nutrition, veterinary health takes many forms,” she said.

Hurley’s internship in north-central Namibia’s Waterberg Plateau Park focused on protecting and promoting public health through wildlife. She participated in health assessments of African buffalo, monitoring for zoonotic diseases — diseases that can cross species to infect humans or domesticated livestock, such as bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis and foot-and-mouth disease. She

also conducted a tick identification project there, which she presented at UF for her master’s degree requirement.

Traveling to the Namib Rand Nature Reserve in western Namibia, her internship focused on wildlife sustainability by monitoring zebras and springbok antelope herds. From Jago, she learned how to encourage practices that support healthy wild game animals in a balanced ecosystem for indigenous people who rely on them for sustenance.

“My internship would not have been possible without the generous support of the Sharon Walton Scholarship,” said Hurley. “It made a difference in the lives of the animals, the villagers and helped prepare me as a public health veterinarian.”

Following an exciting and unusual journey in veterinary medicine and human health, Hurley’s graduation this year at the end of May also proved to be a memorable occasion. Veterinary medicine students are encouraged to select a mentor or relative who holds a professional degree to participate in the commencement program by placing a hood over the graduate’s robe. Her family traveled from Pennsylvania for the occasion and she was very proud to have her father serve as her hooder during the commencement ceremony.

...



Kelly Hurley’s father, Richard Spore, M.D., of Pennsylvania, served as her hooder during commencement on May 27, 2017.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Hurley



Kelly Hurley, D.V.M., poses with a hawk undergoing rehabilitation in the UF Small Animal Hospital’s zoological medicine service this past spring.

“My dream was to be a wildlife vet in Africa, and we both hope to go back there in the future,” said Hurley, adding that her first goal is to gain experience in clinical medicine, and move toward public health and wildlife medicine as her career develops.

The couple relocated to Gainesville as Hurley began her advanced education at UF. Her husband, whose family owned a farm in Zimbabwe, took a job on campus working with a research program in drought-resistance crops.

In 2016, Hurley received the Sharon Walton Scholarship of \$3,500 for tuition and travel for a six-week internship in the African country Namibia. Fulfilling credit requirements for her M.P.H. degree, the experience provided veterinary training as well. Ironically, Namibia also happens to be a German colony, which gave her an unexpected opportunity to practice her German language skills.



# JUST ANOTHER VETERINARIAN MAKING HER ROUNDS.

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**LEFT:**

Jennifer Gray, president of the Class of 2017, is shown after UF College of Veterinary Medicine commencement with her fiancé, Kevin Garbizo.

**RIGHT:**

New 2017 graduates Kristin Dabasinskas, Tamara Downs, Kelsey Cox, Elizabeth Dammers, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick and Matthew Parisi. The majority of UFCVM students receive some form of scholarship support.

## COLLEGE REPORTS

# progress

## IN NEW SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

Story and Photos by Sarah Carey



In the two years since the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine launched an ambitious scholarship initiative, the college has more than doubled the amount of scholarship dollars it awards each year to veterinary medical students.

"We have \$16 million new dollars committed since the beginning of our campaign in 2015, and on the ground, we've doubled the amount of scholarship dollars we are awarding each year," said the college's dean, James W. Lloyd, D.V.M., Ph.D.

This year, the college will award more than \$800,000 in scholarships to veterinary medical students, he said.

"This is directly because of the support we have received from alumni, grateful clients of our teaching hospitals and friends of the veterinary medical profession," Lloyd said. "However, we are also currently exploring some creative and innovative new strategies."

Known as the UF Veterinary Access Scholarship program, the initiative started due to a national conversation about how debt load is threatening to limit access to the veterinary medical profession, and how the college might be able to impact that trend.

Interestingly, this conversation has taken a somewhat unexpected turn, Lloyd said.

"Because owning a practice provides one of the best ways for a student to retire their debt, our program is creating a new discussion as to how practitioners will be able to transition their practices to new practitioners," he said.

Lloyd said the college is now experiencing a "perfect marriage" of early alumni who are preparing to look at retirement and newer graduates looking at owning a practice.

"The student carrying a big debt load with an interest in practice ownership has a good way to offset their monthly student loan payment, as practice owners generally make

more money than non-owner veterinarians," Lloyd said. "At the same time, alumni are considering donations to the college when they sell their practices because there are often tax advantages in doing so."

Approximately 3,000 students graduate each year from veterinary medical colleges in the United States, according to the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges. The most recent American Veterinary Medical Association student survey reports that these new graduates leave school with an average debt of \$135,000.

"The need for veterinarians both nationally and internationally will only increase," Lloyd said. "We feel it is our obligation, to our students, to the profession and to society as a whole, to help enhance student access, keeping our profession vibrant and robust."

♦ ♦ ♦

## UF ALUMNI HELP WITH SCREWWORM OUTBREAK

Story by Sarah Carey



In these photos, Dr. Samantha Gibbs, center, tends to an infected Key deer on Little Munson Island on Oct. 25, 2016 while Dr. Mark Cunningham and FWC biologist Becky Shuman assist. (Photos courtesy of Dr. Mark Cunningham)

Last September, after University of Florida and U.S. Department of Agriculture laboratories identified fly larvae submitted from the Florida Keys as a devastating foreign pest known as New World screwworm, federal and state agriculture and wildlife agencies began aggressive management efforts to control and eradicate the parasites.

It was the first time in 30 years that the pest, a devastating blowfly that feeds on living tissue, had been found infesting animals in the United States. The larvae had been collected from Key deer, an endangered subspecies of the North American white-tailed deer found only in the Florida Keys.

From the initial diagnostics to the implementation of the eradication effort, several professionals associated with the UF College of Veterinary Medicine were involved.

Heather Walden, Ph.D., an assistant professor of parasitology, confirmed the parasite in samples her laboratory was sent. Several college alumni, including Samantha Gibbs, D.V.M. ('01), Mark Cunningham, D.V.M. ('98), Dan Wolf, D.V.M. ('97), and Diane Kitchen, D.V.M., Ph.D. ('97), were among those who played important roles in managing the screwworm outbreak.

Immediately after receiving news of the diagnosis, Gibbs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System veterinarian, traveled to the National Key Deer Refuge in Big Pine Key to assist. She worked with staff from the refuge, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the USDA to help reduce the impact on Key deer and assist with management efforts.



**“The close working relationship between local, state and federal agencies helped ensure the outbreak was eradicated quickly and did not spread to the mainland.”**

— Mark Cunningham, D.V.M.

“While FDOACS and USDA focused on screwworm fly surveillance, domestic animal cases, preventing the movement of screwworm out of the Keys and release of sterile screwworm flies to eradicate the wild-type flies, the wildlife operations team focused on other duties,” Gibbs said.

Among those duties: responding to all incoming calls to the Key deer hotline, euthanizing deer with severe screwworm larvae infestations, collecting Key deer ovaries and testes for preservation, incinerating carcasses to destroy maggots and treating affected deer with antiparasitic drugs to prevent further infestations. The team also darted Key deer to clean wounds of maggots and treat the animals.

“We also placed collars on female deer to track their progress during fawning and

ensured that all activities were conducted in compliance with environmental requirements, including the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Animal Welfare Act,” Gibbs said.

Cunningham, a veterinarian with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, worked with Gibbs and others in treating affected deer and on other outbreak-related tasks. He said the experience was one he'll never forget — one which had been especially meaningful to him, as the end result was the eradication of the parasite and the preservation of an endangered species.

“The close working relationship between local, state and federal agencies helped ensure the outbreak was eradicated quickly and did not spread to the mainland,” Cunningham said.

Between October and December 2016, 135 Key deer were euthanized due to the screwworm outbreak. The last laboratory-confirmed cases of New World screwworm in a Key deer took place on Jan. 7, and on March 23, officials announced the eradication of the parasite in Florida.

“The remaining population of Key deer is estimated at around 600 individuals and is expected to rebound from the impacts of the screwworm outbreak,” Gibbs said.

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Photo by Sarah Carey

## COLLEGE NAMES 2017 DISTINGUISHED AWARD WINNERS

Story by Sarah Carey

**Veterinarians focusing on areas ranging from behavior to small animal practice and international development have been named recipients of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine's 2017 Distinguished Awards.**

**Established in 2000, the program recognizes outstanding alumni, faculty and friends of the college in the categories of alumni achievement, distinguished service and outstanding young alumni.**

**JACQUI NEILSON, D.V.M.**, a 1993 graduate of the college, received the Alumni Achievement Award. Neilson has contributed significantly to the veterinary medical profession through her work in veterinary behavior. In 1995, she became the first veterinarian in the United States to perform a residency in clinical animal behavior in the new American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, or ACVB, becoming board-certified in this specialty in 1997.

She established a successful behavior referral practice in the Pacific Northwest, in which she was active for 14 years. Her research in canine cognitive dysfunction and feline litter preferences has helped advance knowledge in these areas and better therapeutic interventions for pets. A past president of ACVB, Neilson is an internationally respected lecturer and author.

Neilson's best-selling textbook, "Blackwell's Five-Minute Veterinary Consult Clinical Companion: Canine and Feline Behavior," has been translated into multiple languages and is distributed worldwide. She serves on the board of directors for the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon and is a past president of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association. Since 2011, she has served Elanco Companion Animal Health as a regional consulting veterinarian.

◀ **Dr. Moody McCall, far left, president of the college's Alumni Council, stands with the 2017 Distinguished Award Winners: Dr. Virginia Quelch and Dr. Mark Gendzier, Distinguished Service; Dr. Kris Cooke, Special Service; Dr. Jacqui Neilson, Alumni Achievement; and Dr. Tyrell Kahan, Outstanding Young Alumni. Not pictured is the co-winner of the Outstanding Alumni Award, Dr. Stephanie Kane.**

**MARK GENDZIER, D.V.M.**, and Virginia Quelch, D.V.M., both 1987 graduates of the college, received the Distinguished Service Award. Husband and wife, the couple met in veterinary school at UF. They own St. John's Veterinary Hospital and Cat Clinic in St. Augustine and have supported the college through years of referrals, by employment of alumni as associates, through consistent attendance at college and alumni events and activities, and through financial gifts to enhance college programs. Both are respected leaders in their profession and in their community.

Gendzier serves as hospital director, providing leadership while mentoring associate veterinarians. Quelch is responsible for behind-the-scenes hospital operations. Earlier in her career, Quelch conceptualized and developed dermatologies that have resulted in over \$25 million in sales to date. The couple are active in volunteer work in St. Johns County, providing free services and supplies to treat injured wildlife in partnership with local wildlife rehabilitation groups. Quelch also chairs the board of directors of the St. Francis House Homeless Shelter in St. Johns County.

**KIRSTEN COOKE, D.V.M.**, a clinical associate professor of small animal medicine in the college's department of small animal clinical sciences, received the Special Service Award. A 1993 graduate of Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, she joined UF's faculty in 1998, following completion of her residency in small animal medicine at UF.

A board-certified internist, Cooke has directed the small animal medicine residency program since 2002 and has served as adviser to the student chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association since 2005. She oversees the UF Small Animal Hospital's blood bank and volunteers for the college's disaster response team.

Cooke served as a liaison between faculty, architects and builders during construction of the UF Small Animal Hospital in 2009 and 2010. Colleagues and clients consistently praise Cooke for her commitment and devotion to her patients, clients, residents and students. After nomination by a grateful client, Cooke was selected as a finalist in the 2015 America's Favorite Veterinarian competition.

Receiving Outstanding Young Alumni Awards were **TYRELL KAHAN, D.V.M.**, and **STEPHANIE KANE, D.V.M.**, 2011 and 2012 graduates of the college, respectively.

Kahan is performing a Science and Technology Fellowship with the American Association for the Advancement of Science with placement at USAID in Washington, D.C. He serves as an international research adviser at the agency's Bureau for Food Security and his work focuses on projects that encourage dissemination and adoption of agricultural technologies.

Kahan began his veterinary career at a mixed animal practice in Lutz, Florida. In 2015, he performed a research practicum with the Diane Fossey Gorilla Fund International in Rwanda, exploring parasite transmission patterns between humans and mountain gorillas, as well as a volunteer experience with Veterinarians Without Borders, training university students and local health workers in parasite diagnostic techniques. To fulfill his desire to serve in international development, Kahan enrolled in Emory University's Master of Development Practice program, receiving his MDP degree in 2016 after completing a fellowship at the International Livestock Research Institute in Kenya relating to the adoption and retention of biogas in the region.

Kane is the medical director at Care Animal Hospital, a large mixed animal practice in Brandon, Florida, owned by her father, Richard Kane, D.V.M., a 1984 graduate of the UF veterinary college. She supervises and mentors a staff of more than 30 employees with a caseload of thousands of patients each year. Following her graduation from veterinary school, Kane performed an internship at Blue Pearl Veterinary Partners in Tampa, completing and earning her certificate in Small Animal Medicine and Surgery. A member of the college's Alumni Council, Kane actively supports the college's scholarship and other fundraising programs.

She was named "Best Vet" in the 2015 Best of the Bay competition by Creative Loafing and was designated in 2013 as one of the UF Alumni Association's "Top 20 under 30 Alumni." She also volunteers as one of the senior veterinarians associated with Wildlife Rescue Ministries, providing no-cost services to treat sick, injured and orphaned wildlife in her area, and provides veterinary services to the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office K-9 officers.

The awards were presented May 27 at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts during college commencement exercises.

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Alan Pareira and his wife, Barbara, are shown with their four-legged family members, including Gator, shown sitting in front of Alan, who was adopted from the UF Veterinary Community Outreach Program.

## ALAN AND BARBARA PAREIRA

### COUPLE SUPPORTS COLLEGE, SHELTER MEDICINE INITIATIVES

Story by Linda Homewood

**A**lan Pareira came to the University of Florida from Miami in the late 1950s. His mission was to study business and return to his Miami home community to build a career, but along the way, he became a lifelong Gator and his heart also remained in Gainesville.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in business administration from UF in 1960, Alan first set his sights on learning more about the world of finance on Wall Street. The fact that he drove his 1947 Plymouth convertible, top-down, from Florida to New York City, speaks volumes about his determination and optimism. He enrolled in a graduate business class at New York University's Wall Street Division for additional background in economics and finance, knocking on corporate doors until he found a firm willing to grant the young graduate's request for on-the-job training.

**“THERE WAS ALWAYS SOMETHING CRAZY HAPPENING, LIKE A PARROT GETTING LOOSE AND FLYING AROUND THE VAN WHILE WE WERE DRIVING.”**

— Barbara Pareira

Nearly a year later, with experience and credentials under his belt, Alan returned home to work for a New York-based financial firm for the next eight years in their Miami offices. It was during those years he met his wife, Barbara. Through his college friend, a pilot, they met at an airlines party. She worked in sales and public relations for Eastern Airlines, and they married in 1968. As Alan built his business, Barbara continued with the airlines. Their family grew, adding a daughter and son, and adopting assorted cat and dog family members over the years.

“Alan and I were always united in rescuing animals — we even rescued a baby goat and fostered it for a week or so, until we could find it a home,” Barbara said.

Building what would be a long and successful finance career in Miami-Dade County, in 1969 Alan founded First Equity Corporation of Florida, and later Florida Atlantic Securities Corporation, where he served as CEO and a registered investment advisor.

Barbara credits her husband as the one with an exciting life story, claiming hers was ordinary. But one might doubt that as she recalled her long airline career, raising children and stories as a volunteer for the Miami Zoo's outreach program.

“I drove a van with other zoo volunteers to take exotic animals around to local schools,” Barbara explained. “There was always something crazy happening, like a parrot getting loose and flying around the van while we were driving.”

The Pareiras often traveled to Gainesville as a family for football games. However, as Alan developed leadership in business and finance, he also found ways to give back to his alma mater. Sharing his expertise, he became a founding member of UF's Warrington College of Business Advisory Council and chair of the University of Florida Investment Committee. Later, he became a founding board member of the University of Florida Investment Corporation, or UFICO, which provides investment research and guidance to the UF Foundation Board of Directors and affiliated organizations.

Alan is a lifetime member of the UF Foundation Board of Directors. He also was named an honorary member of Florida Blue Key, a distinguished leadership and public service organization at UF.

The Pareiras had always been interested in the growth of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine over the years and recognized it as an important resource in the state, with the emergence of its small animal hospital and shelter medicine programs. Their own trusted veterinarian, Julio Ibanez, D.V.M. ('80), a member of the college's first graduating class, collaborated with the college to offer a Miami clinical training site for UF students.

While in Gainesville for a football game in 2014, the couple visited the college's Veterinary Community Outreach Program. Established by Natalie Isaza, D.V.M. ('94), a clinical associate professor of shelter medicine, the program serves as an elective clinical rotation for veterinary medical students. Touring the clinic, they met a rescue dog who was staying there for extensive treatment of heartworms.

“The attendant let him out of his cage and he flopped down next to Barbara's lap — and that was that,” Alan laughed. “We adopted him, and I came back to pick him up a month later when his treatment was done.”

Aptly named Gator, the boxer-mix joined two other family dogs, Louisa Anna — a refugee from Hurricane Katrina, and Sonny, who Alan describes as “an incorrigible rescue beagle.” Their animal family also includes four adopted cats, Sammy, Louie, Ali and George, who came to them through a relative in southern Georgia.

In their own community, the Miami-Dade animal shelter was doubling in size with the addition of a state-of-the-art Pet Adoption and Protection Center. The Pareiras describe the new facility as a warm, hospitable environment that is inviting for visitors interested in pet adoption. They believed UF's collaboration could benefit Miami-Dade Animal Services and its new adoption center.

The Pareiras were eager to support UF's veterinary expertise and training programs in shelter medicine as a way to extend help for many homeless animals. They made the inaugural gift to support UF's Miami-Dade clerkship that funds UF veterinary medicine faculty and students who rotate through the facility's clinic.

“A constant in our lives has been a shared reverence and love for small animals,” Alan said. “We hope the Miami-Dade center will be a model for animal shelters in Florida and around the country.”

Caring for so many animals over the years also has meant experiencing loss, which Alan and Barbara compared to losing a family member. Wanting to help comfort others during crisis or loss of their pet, the Pareiras provided another gift to the college, establishing a memorial garden at the UF Small Animal Hospital.

Returning from a business flight last year, Alan recalled a serendipitous conversation with a passenger seated next to him as they prepared to land. They exchanged pleasantries and the man seemed anxious to share his loss of a beloved dog cared for at the UF Small Animal Hospital. Pareira responded with how traumatic it had been for them in losing a pet as well. The man, who knew nothing about Alan's background or connection to UF, revealed that in their distress, he and his wife had found a little memorial garden at the veterinary hospital that gave them so much comfort in their grief.

“To think that two strangers shared that experience in 15 minutes on a plane,” Alan said with awe. “In that moment, I felt grateful that we were able to do something so meaningful to others.”

As their plane taxied, Alan noted the irony of their chance meeting and disclosed to the man that he and his wife had, in fact, helped the college build the memorial garden.

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## Honors and Awards



**“I believe that the best teachers have a strong desire to continually evolve one's teaching methods.”**

— Stanley Kim, BVSc

### DR. STANLEY KIM Surgeon honored for teaching

Stanley Kim, BVSc, an assistant professor of small animal surgery, has received the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine's 2017 Zoetis Distinguished Veterinary Teacher Award.

Kim was selected based on criteria that included peer and student evaluations; quality of teaching and impact on student learning; and teaching-related research, service and publishing activities.

In 2016, he played a key role in helping to develop a synthetic canine cadaver now used in UF veterinary surgery labs as an alternative to canine cadavers and live animals.

“My unparalleled enthusiasm for Dr. Kim's contributions to veterinary medical teaching this year is for the part he played in training our students in the use of the new synthetic canine technology,” said Kim's department chair, Rowan Milner, B.V.Sc., Ph.D., who nominated him for the award.

In mid-2016, the college engaged in talks with SynDaver Labs, manufacturer of the synthetic canine models. Kim and his colleague, Brad Case, D.V.M., who also is an assistant professor of small animal surgery at UF, provided essential information that was used to develop a comprehensive, anatomically accurate model that veterinary medical students could use in surgery courses as an alternative to canine cadavers and live animals.

UF veterinary medical students were the first in the world to use the new technology in Kim's surgery lab last fall.

“Simulation is the way of the future for surgical training in both the human and veterinary fields, and in helping to develop and teach with this model. We at UF are leading the way in simulation veterinary surgery,” Milner said. “Our students are lucky to have this opportunity, due in large part to Dr. Kim's dedication and efforts.”

Kim also teaches small animal orthopaedics to junior- and senior-level veterinary medical students performing their clinical rotations. He is a mentor to graduate students and research fellows through an active research program that covers a range of orthopaedic issues. In addition, Kim supervises and instructs small animal surgery residents in the UF Small Animal Hospital and coordinates the college's summer student research program.

“I enjoy seeking opportunities to enhance my teaching abilities through technology,” Kim said.

A board-certified small animal surgeon, Kim is a graduate of the University of Sydney's veterinary science program. He completed an internship in small animal medicine and surgery at Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph, followed by a residency in small animal surgery at UF, which he completed in 2010 prior to joining the college's faculty in 2011.

“I believe that the best teachers have a strong desire to continually evolve one's teaching methods,” Kim said. “I hope to continue improving my approach to teaching throughout the course of my entire career.”



### DR. JULIE LEVY Levy receives UF Research Foundation professorship

Dr. Julie Levy, a professor of shelter medicine at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, has received a UF Research Foundation professorship.

Sponsored by the university's Office of Research, the professorships are awarded to tenured faculty members campuswide for distinguished research. The honor includes a \$5,000 salary increase for three years, and a one-time \$3,000 award for research support.

Double-board-certified in small animal internal medicine and shelter medicine practice, Levy co-founded Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Million

Cat Challenge, which are educational and discovery initiatives with a global impact on the care of homeless animals.

Her research and clinical interests center on the health and welfare of animals in shelters, feline infectious diseases and humane alternatives for cat population control. She has performed long-term studies of contraceptive vaccines for cats, with a recent focus on GnRH as the contraceptive target.

Levy also is the founder of Operation Catnip, a nonprofit university-based community cat spay/neuter program that has sterilized more than 50,000 cats in the Gainesville, Florida, area since 1998. This program forms the basis for research on free-roaming community cat issues, including infectious diseases, caregiver characteristics, population dynamics and anesthesia protocols.



### DR. TOM VICKROY Administrator honored by alma mater

Thomas Vickroy, Ph.D., the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's executive associate dean, has received the 2017 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Texas Medical Branch for his career accomplishments in teaching, service and research.

The award was presented May 19 in Galveston, Texas during commencement ceremonies held for the university's Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, from which Vickroy earned his Ph.D. in pharmacology and toxicology in 1982.

Vickroy, who joined the college's faculty in 1988, is a professor of physiological sciences and has served as the college's executive

associate dean since 2014. In addition, he serves currently as interim associate dean for students and instruction.

Throughout his tenure at UF, Vickroy has taught basic and clinical veterinary pharmacology to professional, or D.V.M., students and previously has taught graduate students in the UF veterinary medical college and in the UF College of Medicine as well as graduate students in the online Forensic Toxicology program.

He has won several awards for teaching excellence, including the College of Veterinary Class of 1996 Teacher of the Year and the Clinical Sciences Teacher of the Year in 2004.

Also active in research, Vickroy's achievements in veterinary pharmacology have included several national leadership roles, including regional animal drug coordinator for the Minor-Use Animal Drug Program and national co-director of the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank, or FARAD, a position he still holds. The FARAD program works closely with governmental regulatory agencies to provide science-based expert advice to help mitigate unsafe residues of drugs and other chemicals in products derived from food-producing animals.



**SARAH CAREY**  
Communications team honored by  
national group

**“This is such an honor,  
both for me personally  
and for the college.”**

— Sarah Carey

A multifaceted effort at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine to boost the school’s national reputation has earned its communications team the 2017 Communications Excellence Award from the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, or AAVMC.

“This is such an honor, both for me personally and for the college,” said Sarah Carey, M.A., A.P.R., director of communications, who led the initiative.

The college used its 40th anniversary to kick off a new branding campaign called “Challenge Accepted.” Carey, who co-chaired the college’s 40th Anniversary Committee, worked in collaboration with UF Health, the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and consultants on the program.

The effort aimed to boost the college’s national stature by highlighting the profession of veterinary medicine and the college’s signature programs, empowering internal stakeholders and institutional ambassadors and increasing alumni engagement.

Nearly 20 special events made up the anniversary program and through the internet, social media platforms and its flagship magazine, Florida Veterinarian, the college shared historical milestones to inform and remind stakeholders how its alumni and faculty have impacted the world through the veterinary profession.

“Coordination and integration of 2016’s multiple initiatives, all of which aligned with college strategic and communications goals, could not have taken place without Sarah’s leadership

and focus,” James W. Lloyd, D.V.M., Ph.D., dean of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, said in an AAVMC release. “By bridging UF IFAS and UF Health communications expertise and working through our strategic communications plan, we have mustered needed resources while leveraging existing ones.”

The new video, “Challenge Accepted,” proved to be the most climactic of the program. It premiered to 250 alumni, donors and faculty and has had nearly 6,000 views.

“We feel like part of the reason it was so well-received was that while it certainly promotes our college and features our people and our programs,” Carey said. “It also tells the broader story of the veterinary medical profession as a whole.”

“Communications excellence and institutional advancement go hand in hand,” Andrew T. Maccabe, D.V.M., J.D., M.P.H., the chief executive officer of the AAVMC, said in announcing the award. “We congratulate our colleagues at the University of Florida for earning this honor, and appreciate the role their work is playing in advancing the interests of all of us in academic veterinary medicine.”

The new communications program and branding campaign precede the installation of a fundraising campaign expected to launch in October, but they already are bearing fruit. Fundraising rose 20 percent over fiscal year totals from 2015, and clinical service revenues from the veterinary teaching hospital rose 9.9 percent during the same period.

**“I am honored to become a member  
of the UF College of Veterinary  
Medicine’s team.”**

— Juan Samper, D.V.M., Ph.D.



**DR. JUAN SAMPER**  
Samper named associate dean for  
students and instruction

The UF College of Veterinary Medicine has named Juan Samper, D.V.M., Ph.D., as its new associate dean for students and instruction.

His appointment is effective Oct. 20 and follows a national search to fill this position, which previously was held by Pamela Ginn, D.V.M. Ginn stepped down from the job in 2015.

A board-certified theriogenologist, Samper currently is a professor and the associate dean of clinical affairs and professional opportunities at Ross University College of Veterinary Medicine, a post he has held since 2015. In addition to his administrative duties, Samper has continued to teach equine theriogenology lectures, working closely with students to ensure their success.

“Dr. Samper brings key leadership and professional experience to the college,” said James W. Lloyd, D.V.M., Ph.D., dean of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine. “In addition to those strengths, his background

reflects a keen understanding of teaching, professional, or clinical, skills and service.”

Samper received his D.V.M. degree with honors from National University in Colombia, followed by M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, both from the University of Minnesota.

In his new role, Samper will oversee instructional and other activities associated with the college’s professional D.V.M. program, along with college admissions.

“I am honored to become a member of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine’s team,” Samper said. “As the associate dean, I hope to continue to enhance the student experience at the college by working with faculty and staff to promote all aspects of student education, clinical training and wellness, while continuing to increase diversity during the student admissions process so that UF is the veterinary school of choice for prospective students around the country and beyond.”