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ALTERNATIVES IN VETERINARY MEDICAL EDUCATION



ISSUE 26
APRIL 2004

Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights

Veterinary Students Making a Difference

Western University SCAVAR Expands Activities

Students Host Meatout, Rescue Homeless Animals and Work on Foie Gras Ban



Western University SCAVAR members Heather Applegate and Michelle Fuller with chapter advisor, Dr. Lara Rasmussen, at the Meatout event.

Michelle Fuller, Vice President
Western University SCAVAR

The spring semester has been busy for the Student Chapter of the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights (SCAVAR) at Western University's College of Veterinary Medicine in Pomona, California. As the organization grows and expands, so does our

outreach into the community and capacity for improving the status of all animals in our society.

The end of our fall semester saw the formation of WeCARE, Western University's Companion Animal Rescue. Because we are a veterinary school, numerous stray, lost, and abused animals land on our doorstep. Members of SCAVAR realized, rather quickly, that we desired an organized manner for caring for these animals, locating their caregivers, or finding them a loving home. That desire burgeoned into the formation of a group of SCAVAR members, which works closely with local humane societies, animal rescue organizations, the campus community, and College of Veterinary Medicine student organizations (large animal, exotic animal, emergency and critical care). To date,

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Student Chapter at UCD Helps with Mexico Spay Camps

The AVAR student chapter at the University of California, Davis (UCD), has made the Mexico Spay Camps one of the group's main priorities. UCD first-year veterinary student Christi Payne started the Spay Camp projects in 2003 and is now recruiting other members of the AVAR student chapter to help.

During the most recent Spay Camp in March, Christi and two other UCD veterinary students, Merriss Waters and Teresa Plagman, traveled to Juarez during their spring break to help with the Spay Camp clinics. They also drove clinic supplies from Northern California down to the Mexican border. On the return trip, they brought back four rescued Mexican dogs who were relinquished at the Spay Camp for recovery and placement.

In addition to volunteering for the Spay Camps, the UCD student chapter members also are supporting the AVAR-sponsored bill which would ban the force feeding of ducks

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Western University SCAVAR

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WeCARE has permanently placed more than 50 animals in loving homes.

On March 20th, SCAVAR board members and the founding officers of WeCARE were honored by Dean Shirley Johnston as guests at the 18th annual Genesis Awards in Los Angeles, California. The awards ceremony celebrates the work of individuals in the media who have produced art, films, and television shows that raise awareness about issues affecting animals. Dean Johnston and the college were formally recognized at the onset of the ceremony for our "no-harm" approach to veterinary medical education.

In addition to WeCARE, SCAVAR is in the process of forming a political action committee that will keep a watchful eye for and take action on animal related issues in politics. Last month, each of the nearly 30 members of the organization mailed letters to California senators urging them to support Senator Burton's proposed legislation (SB 1520) to ban the production and sale of foie gras in California. On a related note, SCAVAR held a vegan barbecue on March 24th in conjunction with the national Meat-Out day. Donations were received from numerous makers of healthful, vegan food items and more than 100 tickets were sold. Thanks to such generous donations and enthusiasm, the event was as fun and good tasting as it was educational and inspirational.

SCAVAR also has planned several events for the month of May including a companion animal photo contest to honor animals unaltered by cosmetic surgery and participation in the IVHS (Inland Valley Humane Society) dog walk on May 1st. SCAVAR is truly excited about the coming year. We have a lot of plans in the works ranging from creating our own annual community service spay and neuter event to launching a food collection program, which aims to team up with other colleges within the university to help feed the city's homeless population, both human and animal.

Above all, SCAVAR is truly thankful for the participation and enthusiasm it enjoys from all the students at the college. We would love to develop relationships with our fellow SCAVAR chapters on other campuses, as well as with all veterinary students and veterinarians who want to work together toward the goal of improving the lives of all animals.

Mexico Spay Camps

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and geese and the sale of foie gras in California. Several students were scheduled to attend the first legislative hearing for the bill at the state Capitol in Sacramento in April. The UCD chapter also has plans for other projects, including enrichment activities for dogs used as blood donors at the school and developing an information piece on animal overpopulation issues to share with other students.

Some thoughts from the AVAR student chapter members who participated in the Mexico Spay Camp:

"I have been pleasantly overwhelmed by the tremendous student interest in volunteering at the Spay Camps. I am thrilled to find that so many of my classmates are willing to volunteer their time and expertise and have such a sincere desire to make a difference for the animals. I think students who volunteer at these camps not only benefit from a wide variety of practical experience (such as physical exams, anesthesia induction, surgical prep, etc.), but also find themselves rewarded just knowing their knowledge and skills are being utilized in such a positive, meaningful way."

*Christi Payne, Spay Camp coordinator
UC Davis Class of 2007*



UC Davis veterinary student Teresa Plagman examines a dog at the Juarez Spay Camp

"The project in Mexico provided medical treatment that included deworming, vaccines, antibiotics for infections, parasite-preventative treatment, as well as spay and neuter services. Although these same services are provided to veterinary patients worldwide, I definitely felt 'different' at the

end of our work day in Juarez. I felt a sense of happiness and a rewarding feeling that came with helping those patients who needed it most."

*Teresa Plagman
UC Davis Class of 2007*

"The work was physically and emotionally taxing. Teresa and I did

physical exams and pre-meds, which meant lifting each of the more than 140 dogs onto the scale and handling any fractious animals. The condition of the animals was often poor. Many were covered with mange and multitudes of ticks. Although I was exhausted at the end of each day, I could not wait to get back to the Spay Camp the next day. I am so thankful for the opportunity to do something to help the animals in Juarez."

*Merriss Waters
UC Davis Class of 2007*

AVAR Representative Addresses Use of Animals in Education at Iowa State University Symposium

Dr. Susan Krebsbach, editor of the *Alternatives in Veterinary Medical Education* newsletter, gave an invited presentation on the use of animals in education at the Iowa State University (ISU) Spring 2004 Bioethics Symposium in March. The audience included faculty and students from ISU's Life Sciences department and College of Veterinary Medicine, ISU researchers and graduate students, and other interested faculty, staff, and students.

The symposium focused on the ethical and legal issues involved in the use of animals in teaching and research. The subject was prompted by current interest in federal legislation regulating the ways in which researchers and teachers can employ animals, including protections that are intended to protect the interests of animals, while also protecting the right of researchers and teachers to train the next generation of research scientists, veterinarians, and physicians. The subject matter was very timely considering that

many schools are currently evaluating the regulations that govern animal use, evaluating existing practices in light of these regulations, and considering the available alternatives to animal use.

Dr. Krebsbach's presentation concentrated on the use of animals in veterinary education and the available alternatives to harming and killing them. She reviewed the numbers and use of animals in veterinary instruction, using data that was collected from an AVAR survey (*Educational Use of Nonhuman Animals in Veterinary Medical Schools for the 1998 - 1999 School Year*). In addition, Krebsbach discussed whether the harmful use of animals in veterinary education is necessary, the types of alternatives that exist, and the broader impact of alternatives and humane education.

Dr. Krebsbach's presentation also included an update on the recent USDA citations against veterinary schools that was prompted by an AVAR petition.