The Global Animal Health Pathway Program Leads the Way

What a difference a year makes. The Allen School’s Global Animal Health Pathway reached some major milestones in 2013. First, in January, Dr. Gretchen Kaufman joined the Allen School management team as the assistant director for global health education and training. The WSU Faculty Senate then gave its approval in April to create the new professional certificate in global animal health. In May, students Heather Hergert and Kate Stevens were the first to graduate with a veterinary degree and a certificate in global animal health.

“We are proud of this unique program,” says Gretchen Kaufman, who is also the coordinator of the Global Animal Health Pathway. “It is the only global animal health program in the country that provides opportunities for motivated veterinary students to learn about and participate in the important field of global health.”

The program is designed to teach students the historical, socioeconomic, cultural, political, and environmental factors responsible for global health disparities. Students also learn how animal and zoonotic diseases are effectively controlled in different cultures and in areas with limited resources. The program encourages students to take a multicultural perspective and a multidisciplinary approach to global health.

“Our program fosters interdisciplinary work across global health professions,” says Kaufman. “It is aligned with the One Health concept.” The vision of the One Health initiative is to improve the lives of all species—human and animal—through the integration of human medicine, veterinary medicine, and environmental science.

Future plans for the Global Animal Health Pathway include offering a new class in the spring of 2014 and securing funding to help support student research through travel scholarship awards.

“Funding is critical for students to participate in important research opportunities overseas,” says Kaufman. “Over the long term we hope to strengthen financial support and expand field research opportunities for our students.”

Learn more about the Global Animal Health Pathway on its recently launched website, global.vetmed.wsu.edu/education/pathway.

Message from the Allen School Director

The impact of the Allen School and success in meeting its mission will depend on our ability to develop the next generation of leaders in discovery, development, and implementation of innovative global health solutions. As noted in this newsletter, we have taken some key steps toward this goal. The awarding of the first certificates in global animal health at the 2013 WSU College of Veterinary Medicine commencement reflects the commitment of our staff to achieve formal recognition for the Global Animal Health Pathway and the efforts of the faculty and students to bring it to fruition. This first-of-a-kind program will not only serve our students, but will serve as a model for the development of similar programs globally. Our graduate program continues to grow—over 50 master’s and doctoral students are currently doing research under the mentorship of Allen School faculty members. The demand to enter the program has grown dramatically and the quality of the entering students is unsurpassed. Graduate student achievement continues to be highly recognized—the top three awards in the college’s 2013 Student Research Symposium were awarded to Allen School doctoral students. Similarly, our students and fellows are having an impact nationally with appointments as representatives in leading global health organizations and participation in broad policy forums. All these achievements reflect positively on the support we have received from within and outside the university. Your continued support is deeply appreciated and reinforces our commitment to make a difference.

Guy Palmer
Creighton Endowed Chair
Director of the Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health
Governor Jay Inslee recently toured the Paul G. Allen Center for Global Animal Health. He was accompanied by his spouse, Trudi, and the directors of agriculture and commerce, Donald “Bud” Hover and Brian Bonlender. U.S. Representative Cathy McMorris-Rodgers also visited the Allen School. The governor, directors, and congresswoman learned how our programs protect animal and public health in Washington. Our global mission provides new opportunities for discovery, development, and implementation of new technology. Discussions regarding these opportunities and advances in the school’s mission with U.S. Representatives Susan Delbene, Derek Kilmer, and Adam Smith took place in Washington, DC.

Dr. Douglas Call was recognized with the Zoetis Animal Health Award for Research Excellence for his research in molecular epidemiology. Dr. Call hosted a project workshop on antimicrobial resistance in Arusha, Tanzania, in October. The project is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

Dr. Guy Palmer has been named to the International Scientific Advisory Board for the Southern Africa Centre for Infectious Diseases Surveillance. The center, supported by The Wellcome Trust, the Rockefeller Foundation, Google, and IRDC, is charged with improving animal and human health through enhanced disease detection and control in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Tanzania.

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Student and Fellow News

The Allen School welcomed seven new graduate students and fellow for the fall semester: Geoffrey Grzesiak, Jessica Klein, Deogratius “Deo” Mshanga, Craigen Nes, Sylvia Omulo, Amos Peterson, and Reiko Weigel. Deo, based in Tanzania, and Sylvia, based in Kenya, are active collaborators in the East Africa Program.

Allison Eavey James, a postdoctoral fellow in the Allen School, has been appointed to the Trainee Advisory Committee of the Consortium of Universities in Global Health. Her role will be to advise the board on how best to engage future leaders in global health across the health disciplines and to structure the annual meeting.

George Wudiri, Jackie Stone, and Petronella Hove were awarded first, second, and third place, respectively, for their poster presentations at the college’s 2013 Student Research Symposium.

Bryce Henderson, a junior biochemistry/microbiology major, was one of 25 undergraduate research scholarship. Henderson, an Honors College student mentored by Hector Aguilar-Carreño, will research the interactions between two viral glycoproteins that are responsible for fusion and entry of a virus into the host cell, specifically paramyxovirus, such as influenza and Nipah virus.

Allen Center Recognized as LEED-Silver

The Allen Center has been formally awarded LEED-Silver certification by the Green Building Certification Institute. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) recognizes the comprehensive approach and implementation of materials and processes to minimize energy use and adverse environmental impact. The accomplishment is particularly noteworthy given the large percentage of the building devoted to BSL2 and BSL3 laboratories, which require higher energy as compared to office and classroom buildings.