



The University of Sydney

# 2008 Newsletter

# PiVE

Partners in Veterinary Education

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Drs Chris Mather and Catherine Culley appointed as Partners in Residence for 2009
- New mentor program for interns to start in 2009
- New honours program produces its first graduates
- Intern feedback continues to exceed expectations
- PiVE Conference 2009 will be 16th and 17th July

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## Partners in Residence

In 2009 there will be 2 Partners in Residence: one located at the University Veterinary Teaching Hospital Sydney [UVTHS] and one located with our Livestock Services at Camden.

Dr Chris Mather from Mosman Veterinary Hospital was selected from an outstanding group of applicants as the UVTHS Partner in Residence for 2009.

Dr Catherine Culley also greatly impressed the interview panel and will be the Partner in Residence at Camden.

This is the first year we will have a Partner in Residence in large animal teaching and we are looking forward to having Catherine assist with the delivery and teaching of production animal services.



Chris Mather

The Partner in Residence Program for 2009 has been generously sponsored by the Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW.

Continuing Professional Development became mandatory in NSW from 2006. This program will provide a great opportunity to veterinarians each year, promote CPD to new graduates and improve the transition from university to practice.

The Partners in Residence were selected on the basis of their commitment to continuing professional development and student education and will act as wonderful role models for our interns.

In 2010 the Board will sponsor one placement for each of the veterinary faculties in NSW.



Catherine Culley

## Mentor Program

Some of the difficulties associated with new graduate life are clearly evident to student interns during final year. Mentors can assist the transition to practice and the development of new veterinarians.

We devoted a large portion of the 2008 PiVE Conference to mentoring skills and involved both students from Year 4 (current interns) and partners.

From early 2009 we will have a web-based resource available to our partners and interns. This will include the opportunity for partners to register as mentors.

To support mentors and mentees in this program I am very pleased to announce that Dr David Foote will be guiding the implementation of this new program.



David Foote

David is an experienced practitioner and consultant to the industry in stress, grief and conflict management. He is also involved in teaching our Professional Practice Program in earlier years.

# Supervisor Feedback 2004-2008

Feedback from our Educational Partners and interns has led to a number of modifications to the academic program and based upon overall evaluations of interns between 2004 and 2008, these changes appear to have assisted student interns in their final year.

The percentage of students graded as outstanding overall has increased and the percentage of students graded as marginal or unsatisfactory has fallen over the last 5 years.

Changes to the curriculum have included an increased emphasis on

animal handling skills development and the introduction of supervisor reports in earlier years for both Professional Practice and Animal Husbandry placements.

The curriculum has also seen modifications to a number of areas of teaching to assist in preparing students for final year rotations and graduation.

Supervisor reports have consistently reinforced the quality of our students.

For the very few interns identified as experiencing problems during final year, the main problem areas

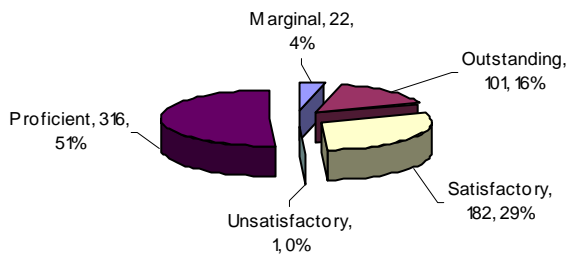
appear to be communication skills, integrating knowledge from earlier years and problem solving.

Overall, supervisor reports suggest that most new graduates are entering practice much better prepared for the challenges of new graduate life.

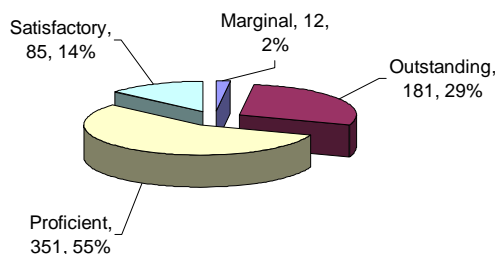
This is clear evidence that the profession, Faculty and undergraduates have been able to work together to provide a high quality learning environment. Further evidence of this quality is available from intern feedback presented on page 3.

*“ An outstanding student... his background knowledge, application and ability to adapt to rural mixed practice were well above our expectations”*

Overall evaluation of intern 2004 placements



Overall evaluation of intern 2008 placements



## PiVE Conference

The 2009 PiVE Conference is still in the planning stages but will be held Thursday 16th and Friday 17th July so please note these dates in your diaries. We do hope to showcase some of the new facilities at the Camden campus this year, such as a new 250 seat lecture theatre.

The PiVE Conference for 2008 was a great success with over 120

delegates attending the two days. Each year Provet have made this Conference possible and we greatly appreciate their continuing support.

There was great feedback from the clinical continuing education sessions and presentations by Ken Johnson, Robert Wrigley, Sanaa Zaki, Christina Dart, Soo Kuan and Darien Feary.

The intern education theme was led by Jane Cox and Penny Oxford who provided mentor training for Educational Partners in preparation for our 2009 mentor program.

Students from Year 4 who are now final year interns were also encouraged to attend mentor program sessions and received skills training on how to be a good mentee.



A new 250 seat lecture theatre will soon be available at Camden

# Intern Feedback 2004-2008

We now have a rich collection of data from student interns between 2004 and 2008.

These data show that the student experience from extramural placements has remained very positive.

The percentage of students rating their final year placement learning experience as excellent has remained constant at 59%. The percentage rating their experience as good or excellent has increased and the percentage rating their experience as inadequate or poor has fallen.

Interns are asked to determine their own learning outcomes for extramural rotations, outcomes which complement Faculty assessed learning outcomes.

Feedback over the years again has revealed that almost 100% of interns typically achieve their own learning outcomes from extramural placements.

Similarly, our interns have consistently rated the vast majority of placements as being excellent for providing opportunities to discuss cases, examine animals, practical

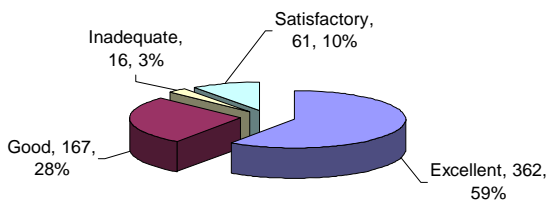
experience, interaction with clients, discussion of practice management and supervision.

Interns find the majority of their placements to be inspiring with veterinarians willing to let them use their initiative and skills and treating them as junior colleagues (interns) rather than students.

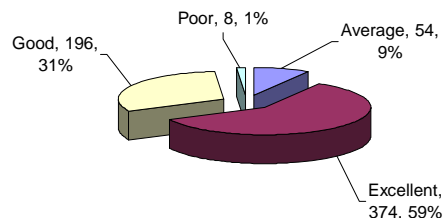
The feedback over the past 5 years is inspiring to read and confirms that our new veterinary student internship program is exceeding our expectations thanks to the generous support of our Partners in Veterinary Education.

*“I was allowed to give medications, write medical histories, lots of surgical experience... Felt like I was an integral member of the team!”*

Overall recommendation to other students  
2004 placements



Overall recommendation to other students  
2008 placements



## 2009 Program Changes

In 2009 interns will complete two rotations (months) at the University Veterinary Teaching Hospital Camden (UVTHC).

This rotation will consist of 3 weeks equine, 2 weeks livestock, 1 week anaesthesia, 1 week dermatology/pathology and 1 week in small animal services.

Interns now complete 5 months of intramural and 5 months of extramural rotations.

The full 10 month program now has approximately 4 months of small animal focused experience, 4 months of rural mixed practice experience and 2 months of elective experience. Our database contains many, varied opportunities for elective rotations.

The major change to our program in 2008 was the introduction of an honours research stream.

Students with a Year 1-4 weighted average mark greater than 70 either completed an honours project during final year and graduated with BVSc(Hons) or completed the standard program and graduated with BVSc(Merit).

Approximately one-third of the year will graduate with honours in 2008. There is a profile of one of our outstanding honours graduates on page 5 of this newsletter.



Veterinary interns now spend 5 months in both intramural and extramural placements

# Educational Partners of the Year 2008

The 2008 Educational Partners of the Year were announced at the PiVE Conference in July. They are Drs Ruth and Howard Thompson from Blayney Veterinary Hospital, Dr George Della from Crown St Veterinary Hospital and Dr David Vella, based at North Shore Veterinary Specialist Centre.

These awards recognize veterinarians and their staff who have provided an outstanding contribution to undergraduate education evidenced by intern feedback.

There are four main categories: rural mixed practice, small animal

practice, rural public practice and elective placements.

The first Educational Partners of the Year were announced in 2006 and were Dr Magdoline Awad and staff at the RSPCA Yagoona and Dr John McFarlane and staff from RLPB Armidale.

We recognized at that time that there were many placements offering incredible learning opportunities to interns so the differing categories were created.

In 2007, the Awards went to Dr Max Zuber and Gladesville Veterinary Hospital, Dr Derek

Major and Agnes Banks Equine Clinic, Dr Steve Whittaker and staff at RLPB Hume and Drs Bruce Adams and Peter Alexander from Bega Veterinary Hospital.

Educational Partners for 2009 will be announced at the PiVE Conference 16th and 17th July and the Awards will be presented at the Conference dinner.

The Awards for Educational Partners of the Year 2008 and 2009 for the category of Rural Public Practice will be presented at the Annual DVs Conference in March 2009 by Professor Peter Windsor.

*“All the staff put a lot of effort into teaching by giving me opportunities to examine animals, gain technical skills, think about cases and interact with clients”*



Dr Ruth Thompson from Blayney Veterinary Hospital receiving her Award from Dr Garth McGilvray at the 2008 PiVE Conference Dinner



Dr George Della from Crown St Veterinary Hospital receiving his Award from Dr Garth McGilvray at the 2008 PiVE Conference Dinner



Dr David Vella at North Shore Veterinary Specialist Centre receiving his Award from Ms Melanie Robson

*“Having worked in veterinary investigations five times since August 2007 including the position of surveillance co-ordinator I can assure you we would have been in a lot of trouble without the students.”*

## Rural Public Practice Placements

In 2007 and 2008 during the Equine Influenza outbreak, many of our interns worked with government veterinarians to provide critical resources necessary to overcome this disease. This contribution is best summed up by the adjacent quote from Dr Tony Morton, RLPB Wagga Wagga.

The Rural Public Practice Program involves placements at RLPBs in NSW as well as AQIS, DPI and

CSIRO in Australia, and similar public health focused organizations around the world.

This vital component of our Program enables our interns to engage with veterinarians responsible for veterinary public health around the world.

The Program certainly expands the career options for many graduates and most importantly, provides an opportunity for undergraduates to develop vital

graduate attributes linked to rural mixed practice and public health. The program has been praised by visiting accreditation bodies and we believe it is essential to the global recognition of our degree.

Veterinarians at these placements and interns have worked together in this program for a number of years and our interns are increasingly aware of the significant value this program adds to their education.



The University of Sydney

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Partners in Veterinary  
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### Your thoughts?

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LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION  
IN  
VETERINARY SCIENCE

The Veterinary Student Internship Program with its lecture free final year is entering its sixth year. Our graduates are now better prepared for veterinary practice and are able to experience a wide variety of career options through this program. Placements are available throughout Australia and internationally. The success of this program is largely due to the dedication of veterinarians and staff from over 400 Educational Partners in Australia and overseas.

## Honours Profile: Neil Christensen BVSc(Hons)

### What was the title of your honours project?

A retrospective study of canine splenic disorders in Sydney, Australia with particular reference to cytopathological and histopathological diagnosis. The project was supervised by Prof Paul Canfield, Dr Mark Krockenberger and Dr Patricia Martin.

### What did you gain from completing an honours project this year?

I have to confess that I am extremely glad to have undertaken this project. I would now be far more comfortable in commencing a masters or PhD oriented project.

I have had a number of prospective employers (especially in more specialised and academic fields) express their approval that we are able to complete a research based project.

The process of researching and writing a paper, submitting the paper and acceptance for publication by the *Australian Veterinary Journal* has opened a completely new facet of veterinary science to me. I can no longer rely upon the dogma which finds its way into common usage; instead this process has taught me the value of evidence based medicine.

### What were the main challenges?

I have been extremely fortunate that my project has been retrospective and that I was able to complete it largely before I commenced any honours rotation (mostly during my vacation rotations). For others who had fixed time frames I imagine their stress levels would have been immense.

We were the first year in this new system and so it was also difficult to know exactly what was required and what will pass as a project. I think this will improve as information about

previous projects becomes available to future students.

### What are you doing now?

I started a rotating internship at the Veterinary Specialist Centre North Ryde in December.



Neil Christensen  
2008 BVSc(Hons) Graduate

"I have had a number of prospective employers (especially in more specialized and academic fields) express their approval that we are able to complete a research based project".