

## **Veterinary Society 2011 President's Report**

The 2010-2011 Veterinary Society had a lot to live up to. The elections in September followed a year and a half of great work by the previous committee who carried the Veterinary Society through the Faculty's centenary celebrations. Having big shoes to fill is no understatement; the hard work of Todd Dewberry's committee saw them receive the 'Best Faculty and Affiliated Site Society' award by Clubs and Societies. With that in mind we wanted to emulate their success by building upon what they had successfully organized and learned. After so many years of trial and error the Veterinary Society provides its own framework for success that each committee must add their own touches to.

The first event to take place was the Changeover/Rugby Keg. This event took place the Friday before the September mid-semester break and followed the rugby team's loss to Medicine. A BBQ and a few kegs helped everyone party the night away. A record number of attendees came including several from other faculties.

A few weeks later the keg reps went on to organize Whacky Races before the Camden Weekender (formerly BBGrog). The events were structured to maximize the funding available through Clubs and Societies. Vet Revue, Camden Farms, and Veterinary Societies all filled in the required paperwork to make this possible. It took a lot of emails, meetings, and checking paperwork again and again. In the summer break it was revealed that someone from Camden had incorrectly filled out Joint Event papers for C+S. The lesson we learned was to never trust anyone else with Veterinary Society matters. It was a great reminder that in order to provide the best events possible we must carefully work within the C+S guidelines.

Before the end of the Semester the Vice Presidents, Kate Drew and Callum Bennie, had renewed our relationship with Hill's to host a Lunch and Learn Lecture. The talk was given on October 11th in Clunies Ross Lecture Theater by Maureen Revington about "The road less travelled: alternative career paths in vet science". Attendees were provided with pizza. This event supported VetSoc's endeavor to provide more than just epic parties to our members. There was also a second Lunch and Learn on the topic of neutraceuticals. In addition to the two talks Hill's also donated \$5,000 to the Society and provided numerous gift baskets for VetSoc events.

October is also when Animalia is traditionally held. This is the annual fundraiser for the Veterinary Science Foundation located in the Faculty. VetSoc executives and members volunteered to help the night run smoothly and got to carry a variety of animals around MacLauren Hall to the joy of everyone attending. Later in the year myself, James Alton Moody, and Kate Drew were invited to again help the VSF raise funds for the faculty. We helped host an art show watching a gallery and answering guests' questions.

On the 19th of November after final exams had finished the Scrub Crawl was organized through Newtown. Newtown was a great choice due to its proximity to the University and number of night time hot spots. A few beers were provided to people who wanted to start the party early on the Vet lawns before continuing on the way.

In February SOLE, a freshman orientation is organized by some staff members in the faculty. This year the AVA student rep, Alena Felkai, approached VetSoc to help host the BBQ that the AVA traditionally hosts one day on the Vet lawns. VetSoc helped secure the food and man the grill. We were a little slow cranking out sausages so the lines were long. But I spoke to everyone in attendance about everything VetSoc does and the importance of joining. It's a harder sale these days since the MedSoc Bookshop closed and members used to be enticed by the 20% discount on text books. Instead my approach was to address BOTH degrees as if everyone signs up and comes to

events and that's just the way it is. "Support the society that supports you." Integrating the degrees in the Society has been an ongoing process many years in the making. There are a lot of Vet/AVBS tensions. These tensions are easing, and membership with participation is increasing from the AVBS degree.

The start of the first semester was key to convincing everybody, old and new members, that VetSoc is legit. An ambitious schedule was launched to host a book exchange, have a pizza sale at lunch, and hold a keg. The book exchange happened on the lawns on March 2nd. Students of each year brought texts they no longer wanted and sold them to younger years. This prevented everyone's uni.sydney.edu.au inboxes from being clogged with seller messages, saved buyers money, and made sellers heaps of cash they may not have made otherwise. It is in ways like this that VetSoc is uniquely positioned to enhance the academic culture of student life in the faculty. The pizza sale was tried as a way to raise funds on March 8th. A specific purpose to use these funds wasn't established. It could have gone to scholarships, lowering the expense of merchandise, providing bigger social events, etc... The pizza sale went well with pizza being sold for 2\$ a slice. Eagle Boys Newtown provided the pizza but because pizza costs so much to buy very little profit was generated. Still, it was a fun event to try during lunch one day. On the 11th of March the traditional Beers, Pie, and Bull Keg was held on the lawns.

Another major social events that was organized was the VetCruise held on April 21st before the Easter break and . The theme was "ABC" - Anything But Clothes. Last year the cruise was so fun and popular so we just had to have our own. Bigger boat, more people, risqué theme. We also ordered more pizza because last year some people were still hungry. The only drama was that the crew of the boat we used were terrible. It was the executives one chance to just party without worrying about RSA laws but instead the boat people were out of control. They pushed guests, they refused sober people alcohol, they were rude in general, etc...Someone ended up kicking a door upstairs in so the cruise ended early. When the guests disembarked the captain tried informing us that we owed them thousands of dollar. We of course knew that we didn't. They tried saying the toilets were overflowing that we broke them but it was obviously a simple repair that crew fixed before our eyes. Anyways, I refused payment at the time and immediately sought the consultation of Angela V from the C+S office. We let it go and sure enough we were not pursued for payment. It was important to stay calm in the difficult, heated situation and know our rights: we had never signed a contract, we wouldn't be taken advantage of, we had the backing of the University Student Union, and the claims were bogus. Key to this whole situation was that the guests were unaware of any of the drama. It wasn't their issue; it was the committee's who handled it.

On May 20th a Trivia Night was hosted on the lawns. The Trivia Night provided students who don't want to get wasted drinking the chance to come show off some skills in a social, night time setting. Some mulled wine was made by the keg reps to last the cold winter night. The winning team was third year vet students.

A Mexican themed keg was held at the start of the second semester. Experimental tequila drinks were offered for a limited time happy-hour. It was a good idea with complaints the service stopped too early. Oh well, always leave them wanting more and abide by RSA at all times!

In addition to these parties the Veterinary Society held its biggest event of the year, VetBall. Erin Grace and James mostly organized the event in conjunction with the Alumni Relations Officer for the Faculty, Skaidy Gulbis. The event was in MacLauren Hall which Skaidy was able to hire for free. The venue catered for 250-300 people. European Catering was chosen for their good service, good quality food, and good relationship to the Faculty in other events like Animalia. The band Randy Wicks and DJ Oscar were friends of Hannah Belling, a keg rep. Swish Events provided the casino style

entertainment and some decorations. The venue was chosen for its prestige and that I was advised no student should graduate from the University without having been to a formal party there at least once. The scope of the Ball was beyond a student piss up. We aimed to bring together students of both degrees, staff from both campuses, partners in the veterinary industry, alumni, and sponsors. This was successfully accomplished and the night went perfectly. We hope this caliber of event can be held in the future with more staff, partners, sponsors, and alumni involvement. It was fun to mingle with everyone and see how some things never really change. The dean was dancing before the end of the night when everyone headed to The Argyle in The Rocks for the after party.

Events the Society does not throw but aids in include the 3rd year Halfway Dinner and Grad Ball for 5th years. This year the 5th years were given \$4,000 loan to repay when they sell tickets. This allowed for them to secure their venue at Taronga Zoo well in advance of their event. The Halfway Dinner was held June 24th at Dalton House in Pymont. Lots of third year staff attended and third year coordinator, Mark Krockenberger toasted and roasted students. VetSoc helped fund some of the venue hire and staff tickets.

The Society had representatives on the Alumni Steering Committee. As president I was offered a place on the committee. The goals of the committee are forming a faculty alumni group that can better meet the needs and desires of alumni and current students. Soon the steering committee will give way to a functioning alumni organization. Working with alumni is an increasingly important and worthwhile endeavor for the Veterinary Society. Our faculty is one that benefits greatly from camaraderie and a sense of family that develops. Continuing to work with the Alumni Relations Officer, Skaidy Gulbis is a mutually beneficial exercise for VetSoc and Alumni.

The Society is also fortunate to have representation on a number of other committees within the Faculty. This year Kate Drew acted as our representative on the Animal Ethics Committee. She was previously involved in the Animal Welfare Society and was the perfect candidate to sit on the committee.

Animal Husbandry and BVSc LTC meetings were frequented by James. As president of the student body James worked with the Faculty to formulate policy changes such as animal husbandry placements and dress code policy. Starting in 2011 students will be required to wear uniforms on placements. Faculty uniforms are costly and not practical in the opinion of most students so VetSoc made sure to have affordable polos approved for sale that will not get dirty in a heartbeat. These placement uniforms will be in addition to the scrubs and dental tops that VetSoc already organizes for different years. Ally Watson, the assistant treasurer, ordered and distributed much of the required merchandise to students this year. Ally also sold and distributed the first ever copies of 'The Little Black Book' at the University of Sydney. These books are condensed versions of anything a new graduate should need to know. They have been sold at veterinary universities across Australia for years but only now were they offered to us.

At the University level James also worked with the branding manager of the University Student Union to seek out new ACCESS partners that would provide members of the Union discounts on items like King Gee and RM Williams. At this time details are still being worked out. Lucy Robson from the Union has always been receptive to ideas the Society has about how the Union can better provide for Society members. In the future a good target would be to offer more benefits to students in Camden. Camden students frequently complain about the lack of available benefits to them but rarely pursue or propose new ones for the Union to investigate.

Since the Society is not all about parties this year we doubled the number and amount of scholarship offered. Instead of two \$250 scholarships being offered to final year vet students we decided we would offer three of those and also one to the value of \$250 to a final year AVBS student. These

scholarships help students' complete rotations and are awarded by Melanie Collier the Sub-Dean of Students and John Baguley the Fifth Year Coordinator.

Tutoring was again offered to first year students. Vice presidents Kate and Callum organized a number of upper class men to help first years towards the end of the semesters.

The Vice Presidents organized for two new microwaves and a stand to be purchased. These complimented the one microwave VetSoc previously purchased and allowed for more students to bring their lunch from home without having to wait to cook food at lunch.

All year long we talked about helping charity more. The Society does so much good but makes little financial or volunteer contributions to other causes. The final week of our tenure Jen Millar, a Keg Rep, and James organized a charity week to benefit AMRRIC. The charity was chosen because it was domestic and relevant to Australia and offers students the chance to volunteer. The organization has programs for animal management in rural and remote indigenous communities. Several members of staff also work with AMRRIC. A lunch time talk, a bake sale, a bbq, and a raffle were held to raise nearly \$2,000. The biggest draw was the raffle raising over \$1,000. Prizes were donated from a number of James' contacts including a \$250 voucher for top Sydney restaurant 'The Cut' including a special dish prepared by James Privett who gives master classes on MasterChef. Crookwell Vet donated \$300 which the committee decided would be broken into a \$200 Myer and \$100 David Jones gift card. Ralph's vouchers, veterinary services, wine, and other items were up for bid. The Dean drew the winners and having her do that was a good way to make it all the more official and keep up the friendly relationship with Rosanne Taylor. AMRRIC week was organized so that it could lead into Northcott Pet Day the following Saturday, September 10th. Northcott Pet Day is organized by Jennie Churchill of Crookwell Vet Hospital. Executives of vetsoc joined in on giving free pet health checks to low income housing residents of Sydney. VetSoc also emailed students helping increase the number of student volunteers for Jennie. Working with Jennie was important because she formerly directed the VSF and still does work around the Faculty, plus she and her husband Rob supported the AMRRIC charity by donating the \$300 to get prizes started. Previously Jennie also directed AMRRIC.

Other charitable contributions from The Society came this year when called upon by staff and students at Camden who were throwing soccer match with funds going to earthquake victims. Later a team of vet students ran to benefit the RSPCA in the 'City to Surf'. T-shirts and singlets were donated to both causes.

At the beginning of 2011 fifth year students were harassed to find someone to produce this year's edition of the 'Centaur'. This annual journal of the Veterinary Society has been published since 1937. There were a few years recently that got skipped so it was important to send several messages to the vet5 email until someone came forward. Looking back on past editions it's amazing to see how far the student experience has come, but how little has changed. Alumni love looking at the 'Centaur' as well. They got copies at VetBall and anytime they were around the Faculty or VetSoc office to pick one up. Several copies were given to the Faculty librarian and to Shirley Ray because they archive them for posterity. VetSoc pays for the publication of 'Centaur'. In the past sponsors paid for advertisement. Each year hundreds get printed with dozens left over so fewer and fewer are getting printed each year to save money (200 or so instead of 400). Copies from 1937-1960 are digitalized at the Sydney escholarship Repository at <http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/5319>.

James enquired why issues since then were not made public and the reason given was that they are too controversial. Apparently around this time the publication was put in student hands not Faculty hands.

Todd Dewberry had started a quarterly publication 'The Chiron'. James edited one edition with contributions from a number of VetSoc members but it was slammed by Melanie C for being too racy. Subsequently James quarreled with the Faculty about what is or isn't acceptable and censorship. A cleaned up and more reasonable approach was agreed upon but James never got around to putting them together again. This is tragic because Todd had won 'Best Publication' with 'Chiron' the year before! Hopefully someone in the future brings it back. It features summaries of events, funny reads, and games. Much like the 'Centaur' but on a smaller scale.

Supporting diversity is an important initiative of the Faculty and the Society. Meetings between James were held with the Dean and Sub-Dean of students to see how the culture is for students and staff. With a gay president and gay vice-president it seems that student support of diversity is higher than ever. As a whole the student and staff bodies are composed of all nationalities, races, sexual orientations and lifestyle choices, religions, economic backgrounds, etc... James spoke on this on numerous public occasions to congratulate everyone and encourage the culture of acceptance to grow. James fielded student responses to how they felt and was alarmed that students with physical disabilities found themselves remarkably disadvantaged and not supported. When James took this to the Faculty the response was made that while understanding the heritage status of the Faculty and the need to work with the University meant changes to infrastructure to accommodate all students were going to be very slow.

The Veterinary Society benefits from a tight relationship with the Faculty. The Faculty supports nearly everything we do. Not all Societies are so lucky. Whenever the Society needs something like venues or resources for events the Faculty is happy to oblige. Likewise when the Faculty needs support such as increasing student attendance to the symposium on Live Export held in September 2011 or for students to partake in a Survey on diversity the Society is there drumming up support. A similar relationship is maintained with the VSF and the UVTH. We all work together, we all support each other.

It was as president of the Society I had the honor of representing the Sydney students on numerous trips to visit rural practitioners. These trips were organized by alumni, industry, and the practices themselves to show City kids what great career and personal opportunities are available around the state. Geoff Scarlett, an alumnus, and ProVet did a fantastic job making the trips possible and affordable (\$40) including accommodation and chauffeured transportation. This year third years went on trips to the South Coast, ACT, and Dubbo regions. In Dubbo, students mixed with Charles Sturt University students. There is an intense rivalry there where CSU students show their adeptness at farm work while Sydney students show a level of class combined with medical and technical knowledge that is unrivaled.

To give an overview of what is happening with students today James spoke at the Partners in Practice Conference held in July and organized by John Baguley. It gave a chance to meet industry and veterinary partners of the Faculty from all over the state. It gave everyone a perspective on where we are, and a chance to hypothesize about where the Faculty and the industry is going.

At the end of the tenure it was time again to support Camden Farms and Vet Revue Societies. The two Societies met with the Vet Society hoping to receive more funding than ever. Unfortunately we were not in the financial position to meet their expectations. Nonetheless, several thousand dollars was still given to them to support one of the biggest most memorable veterinary events, The Camden Weekender. The sum wasn't what they had hoped for. In return they failed to support the Society raffle benefitting AMRRIC and an email was either accidentally or "accidentally" sent to every veterinary student outlining some of the difficulties they had with the Veterinary Society. In the future it is hoped that Camden Farms and Vet Revue can establish themselves as self sufficient

societies with positive relationships with the Veterinary Society. There is no reason for bitterness or hostility, yet drama has been the norm.

As stewards we hope everything we have done has made the student experience within the Faculty an unforgettable one and that the Society is bigger and stronger than ever. With just a little more time we could get so much more done. But it's time for a new committee to take over. I'm confident Dennis Woerde and his committee will do a great job.

I would like to give very big thank you and recognize all the work of my vice-presidents, Callum Bennie and Kate Drew. They kept merchandise stylish and available, worked to get new sponsors, and saw to completion one hundred and one other projects. They never gave less than 110% and I never doubted their ability to do everything perfectly. Treasurer Erin Grace kept optimal financial records for the Society. Beyond that she helped do just about everything including keeping unruly committee members in line and throwing a perfect VetBall. Ally Watson, Assistant Treasurer, also did everything perfectly. Tom Kershaw took the AVBS Rep position seriously. He went above and beyond what anybody before him, and probably after him, will do. Always helping, always getting AVBS involved, and also always doing the right thing! All of these people had keen insight and a reasonable approach to running the Society that helped me temper my wild ideas and ridiculous tendencies. I learned much of my work ethic and organization from them.

Secretary Erin Wiancko and Keg Reps Steve Bailey, Jen Millar, James Bryan, Eloise Ewen, Hannah Belling, and Louise Schaffer - thanks y'all.

Love,  
*James Alton Moody*  
*President 2010-2011*