**OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY VETERINARIAN**

M.A. McCrackin  
University Veterinarian

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

To promote animal welfare and stewardship in scientific, medical, and agricultural research and teaching. Developing a culture of animal welfare and stewardship is fostered through veterinary collaboration and communication with program participants, including principal investigators (PIs), instructors, primary care clinical veterinarians, staff and students, herd and vivaria managers, and animal husbandry and technical staff. Facilitation of research and teaching is accomplished through provision of animal welfare education with an attitude of service. The University Veterinarian is the transformational leader providing vision, passion and direction for the programs of animal teaching and research.

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**Goals and Objectives Achieved for FY 2012**

**Create a logo representing the mission of the Office of the University Veterinarian.**

**Goal accomplishment:** The SMART PAWS (scientific, medical and agricultural research and teaching promoting animal welfare and stewardship) acronym was created by the University Veterinarian and the logo designed by the Office of Research graphic designer.

**Initiate design of a formalized training program.**

**Goal accomplishment:** The University Veterinarian collaborated with the Office of Research to begin design of a formalized web-based and hands-on training program that promotes the principles of SMART PAWS and a culture of exceptional animal care at Virginia Tech. Three modules were envisioned as starting points: basic mouse biomethodology, rodent anesthesia, and aseptic rodent surgical techniques. Initial train-the-trainer sessions for each module are in the design phase and are intended to validate the curriculum, ensure consistency of skills and knowledge of the trainers, and provide opportunities to photograph and videorecord techniques for future training purposes. Trainers will typically be laboratory animal technicians or licensed veterinary technicians. Once trainers have successfully completed the modules, they will teach staff and students who use their respective facilities. This approach will prepare trainers in multiple areas across campus, making training more easily accessible to end users.

The curricular content and video will be made available on the new website of the Office of the University Veterinarian, projected for launch in early fall 2012. Additional modules are envisioned as the program matures, to include topics such as swine biomethodology and anesthesia, advanced research techniques in a variety of species, and advanced surgical techniques. Both basic and advanced core curricula will be organized, and completion of all modules will earn a basic or advanced certificate, respectively.

**Begin development of a website for the Office of the University Veterinarian.**

**Goal accomplishment:** The University Veterinarian began working with the information technology web design team to identify website needs and vision, such as on-line submissions of animal orders, animal transfers and training requests; resources and equipment available in each vivarium; veterinary guidelines for animal care; and useful information for investigators writing the vertebrate animal section of external grants.

**Provide veterinary consultation services to facilitate smooth transitions for new faculty.**

**Goal accomplishment:** The University Veterinarian provided individual consultations to new investigators to identify their program needs and determine an effective strategy for gaining timely compliance approvals. As a result of these efforts and in conjunction with Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and Institutional Biosafety Committee staff, a protocol template was developed to simplify the process of new investigators receiving approval for housing and breeding laboratory rodents.
University Veterinarian M.A. McCrackin instructs Vivarium Manager Charles Nwaihesie during a train-the-trainer session of the new SMART PAWS hands-on animal training program under development.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES for FY 2013**

**Recruit a highly skilled Clinical Laboratory Animal Veterinarian.** The first step in centralizing research and teaching veterinary services within the Office of Research is recruitment of a Clinical Laboratory Animal Veterinarian to work under the direct supervision of the University Veterinarian. The veterinarian hired into this position will play a key role in the implementation of the SMART PAWS training program, IACUC protocol development and review, veterinary medical care and progress toward accreditation of additional academic programs by the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC).

**Continue development and implementation of a formalized training program.** The first module of the training program, rodent biomethodology, is planned for completion and implementation. Once accomplished, all infrastructure and tools necessary for curriculum development, train-the-trainer programs and implementation will be identified, allowing smooth progress for additional training modules in the following fiscal year.

**Complete and launch the website for the Office of the University Veterinarian.** Refinement of the content and layout of the website will continue and interactive submission forms created before launching the website. Once live, content will continue to be added as additional veterinary guidelines and advisements are completed.

**Develop strategies for AAALAC accreditation of additional academic units.** Discussions with academic units ready for submission of AAALAC applications for unit accreditation will begin and assessments of the associated facilities made to determine their readiness. Timelines and program description writing will be initiated.