

Working
to make
alternative
tracks the
status quo

ALTERNATIVES IN VETERINARY MEDICAL EDUCATION



ISSUE 19
JANUARY 2002

Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights

Veterinary Students Making a Difference

Educational Memorial Programs: providing a client-donated source of cadavers for veterinary medical training.

Lori Donley

Virginia-Maryland (VA-MD) Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Class of 2003

Linnaea Stull

University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, Class of 2002

In the summer of 2000, we were offered internships at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in Washington, D.C., at which time we decided to research the issue of harmful animal use in our veterinary curriculum. This led us to the Animal Research Issues section of The HSUS — a small group of dedicated people who work on issues related to the use of animals in research, testing, and education.

We shared with this group a particular concern about the source of anatomy cadavers at our respective veterinary schools, which we feel are ethically unacceptable. At VA-MD, dogs are acquired alive from local shelters and, after being kept for periods ranging from two weeks to many months, they are killed and then embalmed. At the University of Illinois, cadavers are obtained from Class B dealers and auctions.

A few other veterinary schools acquire their anatomy and surgery cadavers from a client-donated source, all being companion animals who died from natural causes or who were euthanized for medical reasons. As we consider this an ethical source of cadavers, we focused our efforts on gathering and disseminating as much information as we could about acquiring client-donated cadavers



Home page for the superbly designed Educational Memorial Programs web site.

for veterinary medical training. Although the information that we collected was geared toward veterinary medical training, the same principles can be applied to other educational programs using animal cadavers, such as undergraduate anatomy courses.

An Educational Memorial Program (EMP), also known as "Willed Body Program," "Client Donation Program," and "Body Donation Program," is established at four veterinary schools in the United States: Tufts University, Texas A&M University, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of California Davis. Tufts University and Texas A&M University currently obtain 100 percent of their cadavers from client-donated sources. Much of the information we gathered was from the anatomy instructors and other faculty members at these two schools.

Since we had spent a great deal of time working with our own schools on other animal use issues, we knew that the faculty and administrators needed accurate, non-biased information if we were going to successfully impart our message. This led to literally hundreds of e-mail messages to the faculty at the veterinary schools with an EMP,

continued on page 3

Inside this issue

Veterinary Students Making a Difference - Educational Memorial Programs	1
Accent on an Alternative - Canine Intestinal Anastomosis Simulator	2
Spotlight on a School - University of Montreal Faculty of Veterinary Medicine	4
Comparison of Alternatives Offered by Veterinary Schools	6
Comparison of Alternatives Offered by Schools of Veterinary Technology	8
Resources Available	12

Canine Intestinal Anastomosis Simulator

Ben Kitchen, D.V.M.

Alternavivae

Developed for veterinary students as a psychomotor skills practice device, the canine intestinal anastomosis simulator is suitable as an introductory model for anastomosis and enterotomy technique. It is comprised of three components: a storage case, a rigid mounting insert, and an intestinal insert. In conjunction with existing videotape and/or faculty presentations detailing surgical technique, the simulator provides students the opportunity to perform multiple procedures to appreciate and understand applicable technique and tissue handling practices. The lumen of the model may be filled with an ingesta simulate of the operators choice to gain an understanding of the technique of working with contaminated structures, prevention of field contamination, and leakage control.

The intestinal anastomosis model is part of a developing library of models that are designed to fit in a convenient, universal

project case. The case can easily be stored in a backpack or book bag allowing the user to transport the model to and from classrooms, labs, and home. All components of the simulator are washable and easy to maintain.

The intestinal insert is comprised of a homogeneous elastomeric material that approximates some of the mechanical characteristics of canine jejunum. It is somewhat friable in order to emphasize gentle tissue handling. The insert can be removed from the rigid box insert for replacement or modification. The intestinal segment can be stretched and distorted to allow operators to implant tumor or foreign body simulates.

The simulator's purpose is to provide students an affordable model with which to develop and practice basic surgical technique through which confidence and mastery are derived. The creation of this simulator was intended to provide students

the means to develop the skills required for successful, live animal surgery.

The canine intestinal anastomosis simulator is manufactured and marketed by:

Pacific Research Laboratories
P.O. Box 409
10221 SW 188th St.
Vashon, WA 98070
Phone: 206-463-5551
Fax: 206-463-2526
E-mail: info@sawbones.com
Web site:
<http://www.sawbones.com>

The simulator was developed, prototyped, and prepared for manufacturing by:

Ben Kitchen, D.V.M.
Alternavivae
2415 Northwest Boulevard
Columbus, OH 43221
Phone: 614-486-9150

Educational Memorial Programs - Continued from page 1

and our project extended many months beyond the summer internship! During the school year following our internship, we worked on the project often and, after almost a year, we produced a 35-page manuscript on Educational Memorial Programs (EMPs). It was reviewed and approved by faculty at Texas A&M University (Dr. Anton Hoffman), Tufts University (Drs. A.M. Kumar and Gary Patronek), and the University of Wisconsin (Dr. Norman Wilsman).

In the spring of 2001, we turned our research over to The HSUS. In their capable hands, a beautifully designed web site was created, the aim of it being to provide helpful information about EMPs to interested veterinary students and faculty. The web site address is:
www.educationalmemorial.org

The site includes answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about all aspects of Educational Memorial Programs, including the ethical and educational benefits, and the mechanics of establishing such a program. Clearly, veterinary administrators have concerns about implementing any program that might cost money, drain faculty and staff resources, or have an impact on the educational value for their students. We

addressed these concerns thoroughly. The site includes a step-wise plan for implementation of an EMP, specific protocols that Tufts and Texas A&M use for embalming donated animals, sample euthanasia brochures addressing the educational memorial option tactfully, and sample client consent forms.

A letter introducing the EMP concept and announcing the web site was sent to the Dean, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Veterinary Teaching Hospital Director, and anatomy professors at all of the U.S., Canadian, and Australian veterinary schools. The web site was announced to various student-oriented discussion groups, including the AVAR's discussion group *AVAR eGroup for Students*. In addition, The HSUS sent a press release announcing the web site.

We are hopeful that the web site will provide the information necessary for interested veterinary students and faculty to establish an Educational Memorial Program at their school. To date, we have received a response from veterinary school faculty and administrators at three institutions. We were pleased to learn that the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine has established a committee charged with

evaluating the merits of initiating an EMP at their school. Implementation of an EMP at other veterinary schools may be student-driven, as we have been overwhelmed by the interest veterinary students have shown in starting an Educational Memorial Program at their school since the launch of this web site.

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals who contributed considerably to this project:

Ms. Gina Alvino, The HSUS
Dr. Jonathan Balcombe, Immersion Medical
Ms. Tamara Hamilton, The HSUS
Dr. Anton Hoffman, Texas A&M University
Mr. Andrew Knight, Murdoch University
Dr. A.M. Kumar, Tufts University
Dr. Gary Patronek, Tufts University
Dr. Andrew Rowan, The HSUS
Dr. Martin Stephens, The HSUS
Dr. Norman Wilsman, University of Wisconsin

We welcome further discussion on Educational Memorial Programs. Please visit the web site and feel free to contact Lori Donley (ldonley@peoplepc.com) or Linnaea Stull (linnaeastull@yahoo.com).