Chair’s Message

by Wendie Cohick, Ph.D., Chair

In this issue, I am pleased to introduce you to our two new Teaching Instructors: Anna Hausmann, DVM, and Sara Malone, PhD. They are welcome additions to our departmental faculty.

Professor JP Advis (pictured at left) retired at the close of 2018. Friends and family joined SEBS faculty and departmental staff in celebrating his many years of teaching, neuroendocrine research, and service. Best wishes on your retirement, JP!

Dr. Larry Katz will return from his sabbatical in Fall 2019 after ten years serving as the Director of Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Larry looks forward to teaching Companion Animal Science, a course he developed in 2008.

I hope you’ll enjoy reading the news of our faculty’s and students’ activities over the past year. I encourage you to follow our Facebook page (“Rutgers Animal Sciences”) where we regularly post department news. As always, we’d love to hear from you!

Spotlight on Faculty: Carol Bagnell, Ph.D.

Congratulations to Dr. Carol Bagnell, winner of a 2019 SEBS Teaching Excellence Award! Carol is a superb reproductive biologist who interweaves her original research and ideas such as her “lactocrine hypothesis” throughout her Animal Reproduction lectures along with the most recent scientific discoveries. The impact of her teaching is reflected in students’ comments, e.g.,

“I love Dr. Bagnell’s way of teaching. She uses real life examples which help me understand the material.” ~ “Dr. Bagnell did a fantastic job of covering complex topics so that they were understandable.” ~ “I LOVE this class, to me it was very interesting.”

An active, federally funded researcher, Dr. Carol Bagnell invests her time and energy in training the next generation of scientists through teaching, research, and mentoring activities (both in and out of the classroom). Members of her “Sow Watch Club” (which she initiated in 2011) assist with monitoring late pregnant sows for signs of birth, both in person or remotely via a livestream webcam broadcast. At the time of birth, students help with the delivery, processing, and feeding of piglets for research studies.

Carol Bagnell extends her effective mentoring methods to Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences graduate students to ensure that they are equipped with all the professional and life skills necessary to succeed in their chosen career path. Plus, she continues to be a mentor to them after they graduate.

Dr. Carol Bagnell is the ultimate role model for those aspiring to be academic scholars. We’re lucky to have her!
Undergraduate Program News
by Aparna Zama, Ph.D., Undergraduate Program Director

I am happy to announce that our Rutgers NESA team won 2nd place Overall Institutional finish! See the “News & Events” section of our department website for individual student and team results.

Animal Science continues to be the most popular major at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. The campus farm and small-animal facilities are integral to our program. Students enroll in hands-on animal practicums to fulfill their experience-based education requirements, where they learn about the handling, management, feeding, reproduction, physiology, and behavior of beef cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, and laboratory animals. They also have opportunities to assist with ongoing research projects and conduct independent research to study integrated physiology of animals at the whole system, cellular, and molecular levels.

These seniors have completed their honors theses and are anticipating graduating as George H. Cook Scholars, Class of 2019 (advisors in parentheses): Aditi Badrinath (Bello); Kristen Finger & Alison Lawlor (Katz/Becker); Sydney Gavinelli (Westendorf); Nicole Girgis, Samantha Kern, Angela Maeng & Allison VanSchaik (Roepke); Alyssa Rodriguez (Bieszczad, Psychology, & Zama); Leena Roy (Williams); Christian Susu (Fonseca, Entomology); Ananya Tirupathur (Sarkar); Dana Tsuchida & Julie Wang, Biotech (Bagnell); and Samantha Wallace (McKeever).

Meet Anna Hausmann, DVM ~
Teaching Instructor & Prevet Advisor

In Fall 2018, Dr. Anna Hausmann came to Rutgers from a mixed animal veterinary practice on the Illinois-Iowa-Wisconsin border (the Midwest version of the tri-state area), where she treated all creatures great and small, from reptilian and pocket pets up to farm animals.

After receiving her B.S. degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology with a minor in Animal Sciences from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Anna earned her DVM from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. All these experiences enrich Dr. Hausmann’s classes.

Dr. Anna Hausmann teaches Pathophysiology and Integrated Physiology. Her alpaca “co-instructor” in Pathophysiology morphs into a different veterinary patient in her weekly case studies. In this photo, “Doug” is a male poodle with hyperadrenocorticism. In Fall 2019 “Dr. H” will also teach an honors seminar on Biosecurity in Animal Agriculture.

As the new prevet advisor, Dr. Hausmann advises students on courses and hands-on experiences and answers questions about veterinary medicine or any animal-related topics. Stop by Bartlett-213D; Anna’s door is always open!
Dr. Sara Malone returns to Bartlett Hall as a Teaching Instructor

A Michigan native, Dr. Sara Malone completed her B.S. in Animal Science at Michigan State University (MSU) and her M.S. in Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences here at Rutgers with Dr. Ken McKeever. She then worked at MSU’s McPhail Equine Performance Center before taking a position as a 4-H Youth Educator with MSU Extension.

Sara’s work at McPhail reinforced her interest in equine biomechanics, and she began a Ph.D. in Veterinary Science at the University of Melbourne. Her research focused on equine forelimb asymmetries and factors influencing hoof shape.

Dr. Malone was an Assistant Professor and the Equine Program Coordinator at Morehead State (Kentucky) before joining the Rutgers faculty in January 2019. She currently teaches Animal-Assisted Therapy and an honors seminar on Animal Behavior. In Fall 2019 she will offer a new course in Domestic Animal Behavior and Welfare. Welcome back, Sara!

An Undergraduate Role Model: Dana Tsuchida ‘19

Excelling in academics, research, and service, Dana Tsuchida is an Animal Science major in the Pre-veterinary Medicine/Research option and an Art History minor. Her story gives insight into the many opportunities available to our undergraduates. Read on!

As a senior, Dana recently shared her passion for veterinary medicine with our newest Scarlet Knights by serving as peer instructor in a Fall 2019 First-Year Interest Group Seminar (FIGS) on “Exploring Veterinary Medicine.” (Dana is pictured front center in her FIGS class photo.)

Since her own first year on campus, Dana has shown her talents for leadership in a variety of organizations. As a SEBS Student Ambassador and Tour Guide, she has welcomed prospective students and led campus tours. An active leader in the Society of Animal Science, Dana has worked tirelessly at Ag Field Day BBQs and has helped organize Rutgers students for NESA quiz bowls, animal judging, and scientific presentations. She has also served the Rutgers Veterinary Science Club as activities coordinator, treasurer, and now president.

Dana has worked in several labs and recently completed a research thesis (Bagnell lab) on the effects of nursing on gene expression in the porcine small intestine as part of the G. H. Cook Scholars Program. (Pictured above: Julie Wang ‘19, Dana, Dr. Bagnell & Katie Fafara ‘20 after Julie’s and Dana’s presentations.)

In a summer study abroad program, Dana assisted a veterinarian in a mixed practice caring for farm animals in Belize. She also worked at the Bergen County Zoo caring for a variety of exotic animals and is currently working part-time as a veterinary technician at a local, small animal hospital.

Named Alpha Zeta Student of the Year (2017) Dana Tsuchida stands out as a role model for our undergrads. We wish Dana the best of luck next year at the Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine!
New faculty. We welcome three Rutgers faculty who are new members of our Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences (EAB) Graduate Program. Each brings unique strengths and perspectives to share with students.

Since 2017, Dr. Andy Babwah has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics of the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and a member of the Child Health Institute of New Jersey. After completing his postdoc at the Robarts Research Institute in London, Ontario, he joined the faculty of the University of Western Ontario, where his research led to an in-depth understanding of how the kisspeptin receptor regulates fertility. Through his studies, he hopes to understand the pathogenesis of pubertal disorders, female infertility, and early pregnancy loss.

Dr. Karen Schindler, Associate Professor of Genetics, joined the Rutgers Department of Genetics in 2012 following a postdoc at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also a member of the Human Genetics Institute of New Jersey. Research in her laboratory focuses on understanding the molecular mechanisms that lead to aneuploidy (abnormal number of chromosomes) in oocytes. Aneuploidy is the leading cause of infertility, miscarriage, and developmental disorders such as Down syndrome. Using the mouse oocyte model, her laboratory is studying how signal transduction networks regulate female meiosis.

Dr. Phoebe Stapleton is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy and a resident scientist at the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute (EOHSI). Following a postdoc at West Virginia University, she was a Research Assistant Professor at WVU, then a guest researcher at the CDC National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Her research focus is microvascular physiology adaptation to disease and environmental exposures as well as the impact of xenobiotic exposure during pregnancy and its bearing on maternal, fetal, and offspring health.

October 2018 degree recipients. Two EAB students earned October 2018 degrees.

Miguel Cabrera, Ph.D. (Sarkar lab), whose dissertation was titled “Fetal alcohol exposure induces neurotoxic effects on beta-endorphin neurons through microglial activation,” is now a clinical operations specialist at Target Health in New York.

Nick Margolies, M.S. (Anthony lab), focused his thesis on “The role of Atf4 in sulfur amino acid restriction.” After moving to Portland, Oregon, he served in AmeriCorps for several months. He anticipates that his next step will be working in a research laboratory in the Pacific Northwest.

Spotlight on our next graduate. Ali Yasrebi, Roepke lab manager par excellence, has been wearing two hats for a few years. In addition to his full-time role as a department employee, Ali has been pursuing his Master of Science degree in Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences. In his May 2019 defense seminar presentation, Ali will report on his feeding and exploratory behavior studies in male and female mice from two different transgenic ER-alpha knockout strains. Best wishes, Ali!
The 2019 Nutrition, Endocrinology and Food Science (NEFS) Graduate Student Conference, held April 2, was a collaboration between our EAB Graduate Student Organization (GSO) and the Nutritional Sciences and Food Science GSOs.

Highlights of the conference included keynote addresses by Dr. Troy Ott from Penn State and Dr. Rafael de Cabo from the National Institute of Aging as well as poster sessions, a career panel, and talks by four Ph.D. candidates, including our own Qiaoqiao Zhu.

Innovations were well-received and included early-morning and noontime poster sessions, a fourth presentation by Ph.D. candidates, seating at tables, and active breaks led by Rutgers Recreation staff (At left: Kelly leads “Mindful Movement”).

Data from Bill Fritz’s Ph.D. dissertation (2017) and Lena Sena’s G.H. Cook honors thesis (2015) are reported in an article in this issue:


The authors describe social and endocrine factors that influence sexual behaviors, including self-enurination, in male goats. Self-enurination is activated by androgens and likely serves to signal sexual readiness, attract females, and possibly signal social status to other males, as well as contribute to the up-regulation of a male’s own reproductive physiology and behavior.
Dr. Mike Westendorf: Extension Specialist of the Year!

Dr. Michael Westendorf was named “Specialist of the Year” at Rutgers Cooperative Extension’s December meeting and awards lunch at the Cook Student Center. He was selected for the award by Rutgers County Agents from the Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Health Sciences, and 4-H Departments in recognition of his service to these departments. (The primary clientele for most of the 30+ Rutgers Specialists is the County Extension Agents.) Mike’s job is to carry out livestock and dairy educational programs and provide information and service primarily for counties.

In his role as a professor in our department, Dr. Westendorf teaches Production Animal Management and Farm Productivity Analysis in alternate Spring semesters. He also coordinates our Dairy Cattle Artificial Insemination (AI) class, which is held during Spring Break. Dr. Enos Perry would be proud!

Andrew Morace ’20 and his “Exploring Animal Science” First-Year Interest Group Seminar (FIGS) class took a trip to the Cook Campus Farm for a tour last fall to better teach his students about getting involved on the farm.