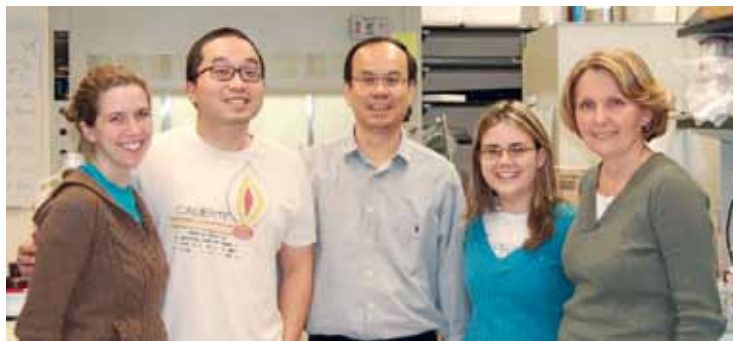


Animal Science Update

The Department of Animal Sciences

Newsletter

2008



Carol Bagnell, pictured far right, with members of her lab.

Chair's Message: Our Department Is Growing

by Carol A. Bagnell, Ph.D., Department Chair

Much has happened in the year since our 2007 newsletter was published. Bartlett Hall upgrades are nearing completion with a new roof (almost!) and renovation of our basement teaching and research laboratories. The long-awaited Endocrine Research Facility (pictured above left) opened in September amid great fanfare. Our grand opening celebration, with scientific presentations by eminent researchers and a ribbon-cutting ceremony, was followed by the First Annual Endocrine Research Showcase.

Our undergraduate program continues to excel. Veterinary Science Club President **John Lucy** graduated as Class of 2008 valedictorian! In fact, many of our Animal Science majors completed their degrees with high honors and now attend top-ranked veterinary schools and graduate programs. Currently, with 290 upper class students declaring Animal Science as their major, ours is the largest undergraduate program at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS). Despite our heavy course load, we continue to mentor undergraduate and graduate students in our labs as we do cutting-edge research in the fields of endocrinology, equine sciences, and animal health and the environment.

Several of our faculty members have advanced to administrative positions. **Larry Katz** is now Director of Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Associate Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), and I am following in his footsteps as department chair. **Barry Jesse** serves as SEBS Associate Dean of Academic Administration, and **Henry John-Alder** is chair of the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources. **Daniela Sharma** (pictured on back right, at Club Fest 2008 with Society of Animal Science President Allison Walker '09), a former Ph.D. student of Larry Katz, joined us as an instructor to teach courses such as Careers in Animal Science and Companion Animal Science. Larry is shown above right gleaning collard greens as part of the Rutgers Against Hunger initiative; see rah.rutgers.edu. Under his leadership, NJAES farms will grow additional crops for donation to food banks in partnership with Farmers Against Hunger.

I am pleased to announce that we are actively recruiting three new faculty with expertise in endocrinology to help "grow" the department's research and teaching programs. The new faculty hires will contribute to a university-wide initiative in food, nutrition, and health. These tenure-track positions, advertised in the September 12th issue of Science and posted online at ScienceCareers.org, are described at sebs.rutgers.edu/employment/endocrinology.asp. Review of applications began October 1st and will continue until the positions are filled. Please spread the word!

State-of-the-Art Facility to Promote Endocrine Research

The Grand Opening of the Endocrine Research Facility and First Annual Endocrine Research Showcase attracted hundreds of Rutgers and UMDNJ faculty, staff, and students as well as representatives from the NIH and state government, pharmaceutical and biotech industries, and the press. The September

8th events began with lecture presentations on obesity and cancer by Ronald Evans of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies and Andrew Feinberg of John Hopkins University. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was followed by a buffet lunch on the lawn adjacent to the new facility, located on Poultry Farm

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Road near the Environmental Sciences Building on Cook Campus. Afternoon tours and poster presentations stimulated animated conversations between the endocrine researchers in attendance.

Dipak Sarkar is Director of the Endocrine Program at Rutgers (endocrine.rutgers.edu). Move-in day for the Sarkar lab was shortly before the Grand Opening.

New Instructor to Teach Companion Animal Science

Animal behavior, or more specifically, companion animal behavior, has fascinated **Daniela Sharma** since she learned the term "ethology" as a freshman at the University of Connecticut. Daniela earned her Ph.D. in 1999 working with Larry Katz, studying the hormonal and social regulation of male reproductive behavior. After graduate school, Daniela began a decade-long adventure in creating and teaching online courses and helping to manage an online college dedicated to pet behavior and shelter management. Daniela has worked in research program management at Rutgers/NJAES since 2001.

As an instructor in her "home" department of Animal Sciences, Daniela coordinated our Fall introductory course, Animal Science. In Spring 2009 she will teach Companion Animal Science, a course developed by Larry Katz last year that focuses on a range of pets from dogs and cats to pythons and rats. Daniela will guide her students to a better appreciation of the human-animal bond as well as the health, welfare, and behavior of our companion animals. Timely issues such as the legal, financial, and social responsibilities that arise from pet ownership will be discussed. She looks forward to sharing her passion for companion animals with our undergraduates.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Learning happens not only in the classroom and during professors' office hours (see photo below of JP Advis working with some Endo-



crinology students) but also in laboratories, on the farm, and in zoos, veterinary hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies. Additional professional development occurs through our five undergraduate clubs: Society of Animal Science, Veterinary Science Club, Equine Science Club, RU Seeing Eye Puppy Raising Club, and the new Animal Behavior Club.

We proudly salute the G.H. Cook Scholars Class of 2008 who worked with our faculty: **Megan Dilts** (Bagnell); **Katherine Bradbury** (Cohick); **Brian Calabro** and **Max Rozenbaum** (Katz); **Jessica Roos** (McKeever); **Cara Allan**, **Melissa Hobor**, and **Catherine Shatynski** (Ralston); **Laura Gladney**, **John Lucy**, and **Victoria Shekk** (Williams); and **Michael Esmail** (Uzumcu). Max is pictured top on page 3 with mentor **Susan Becker** at our graduation party. The Aresty Research Center awarded the Katz scholars Research Grants last Spring, and nine other students received Fall 2008 Research Grants.

Students are working with animals that will be shown on Ag Field Day (April 25; see rutgersday.rutgers.edu), including weanlings bought through the Young Horse Research and Teaching Program directed by **Sarah Ralston**. Many students will also be involved in the Equine Science Center's Horses 2009 program on March 28-29 as well as the yearling auction on April 26 (see esc.rutgers.edu for information regarding both events). Sarah Ralston is pictured bottom right on page 3 during her May 2008 Camelot-themed wedding to William Kaminski, who is shown riding RU Sir Galahad, which he bought at the 2001 yearling auction.

Graduate Program Highlights

Brian Leibowitz completed his Ph.D. in May 2008 in the Cohick lab and is now a postdoctoral associate at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute. **Sara Malone** completed her M.S. during the summer in the McKeever lab and is employed as a research technician at the University of Michigan.

Graduate student representatives for the 2008-2009 academic year are **Jushun Cheng** and **Alison Golinski**.

The 2008 Graduate Program Service Award recipient was **Larry Katz**, who was acknowledged for being "a tireless, enthusiastic supporter of both faculty and students of our graduate program in countless ways."

Through the Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences Graduate Student Organization (GSO), our students have sponsored fundraisers and a recent trip to the Wild Animal Safari at Great Adventure. **Tiffany Polanco**, last year's GSO president, is pictured left on page 4 with **Cory Parrish** and a friendly giraffe. Current GSO officers are **Kristy Longpre**, president/treasurer; **Alison Golinski**, vice president; and **Christine Duncan**, secretary. Our GSO is cosponsoring the "Nutrition, Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences Conference" on April 3, 2009.

The following students are currently funded on fellowships: **Kathleen Ferio** (Life Sciences Fellowship), **Andrea**

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sebs.rutgers.edu/development/donate.asp*

Haulenbeek (Aines Fellowship), **Emily Lamprecht** (White-Stevens and Aines Fellowships), **Kristy Longpre** (NSF GK-12 Fellowship), and **Tiffany Polanco** (NIH Ruth Kirschstein Fellowship).

Alison Golinski (John-Alder lab) received a fellowship from NSF and the International Institute of Education to participate in the Central Europe Summer Research Institute. She conducted research on the hormonal regulation of sexual dimorphisms in gecko lizards with her collaborator, Lukas Kratochvil, at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. Alison is pictured at right center with a gecko.

The Graduate School–New Brunswick gave Conference Travel Awards in 2008 to **Joseph Chen**, **Christine Duncan**, **Amy Frankshun**, **Alison Golinski**, **Andrea Haulenbeek**, **Emily Lamprecht**, and **Kristy Longpre** to present their research results at scientific conferences.



Harold Hafs Honored by Professional Society

Congratulations to Professor Emeritus **Harold Hafs** on receiving the 2008 Retiree Service Award from the American Society of Animal Science. After retiring from Merck & Co, Harold joined the Animal Sciences faculty in 1993 and chaired our department from 1995 to 1999. He created the first several issues of the Animal Science Update and was an invaluable contributor to our department’s programs. Harold served as principal investigator of the USDA grant that supported the creation of the Animal Science Image Gallery, now maintained by the National Agricultural Library (anscigallery.nal.usda.gov). Harold happily reports that he was recently replaced as its Editor-in-Chief.



Stay Connected!

by *Carol A. Bagnell*

To our friends who have supported us through generous gifts to the Rutgers University Foundation, I offer my sincere gratitude. To our friends who have yet to remember us, I invite you to start giving now. Support for our various programs helps us continue our tradition of excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Please stay in touch via email at animalsci@aesop.rutgers.edu. Write to us with your memories. Best wishes, *Carol*

Please Make a Donation!

- Yes, I wish to support the continued excellence of the Department of Animal Sciences and Graduate Program in Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences with a gift of:
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Welcoming New Students

The graduate students' safari trip, the First-year Interest Group Seminars (FIGS), and our department Club Fest (*all pictured above*) were designed to welcome new students to our graduate and undergraduate programs.

Kendall Phelps '10 (*pictured in center photo, at left*) and **Kerrie Tiedemann '09** (*pictured in center photo, at right*) served as peer instructors of the First-year Interest Group Seminars (FIGS). Last summer they participated in peer instructor training, which continued throughout the Fall semester, and each planned their syllabus for a ten-week "Exploring Veterinary Medicine" FIGS. Reflecting on her experience, Kendall writes: "For me, the biggest triumph was not during class but afterwards. Students often stayed after to talk with me and discuss different options they would have after college, as well as just general questions about college life, such as registering

for classes. I was very excited that they obviously saw me as a mentor but trusted me enough that I was considered a friend as well." One of Kendall's FIGS students, **Rebecca Diaz '12** (*pictured center with Kendall and Kerrie*), learned "a great deal about animals and the roles they play in our society, and also about the roles we, as humans, play in the lives and wellness of animals around us....I am very grateful to this course for opening up my mind to the endless possibilities that the veterinary world has to offer." (See figs.rutgers.edu.)

Also new this year, the Byrne Family First-Year Seminar Program helps first-year students connect with prominent professors involved in cutting-edge research at Rutgers. **Dipak Sarkar** taught "Endocrine Health and Diseases," one of over 130 Byrne Seminars being offered during the 2008-2009 academic year (see byrneseminars.rutgers.edu).

Photo credits: Lukás Kratochvíl (pg. 3, middle photo); Kristy Longpre (pg. 4, left photo); Nick Romanenko (pg. 1, right photo); Margaret Yeaw (pg. 3, bottom photo); K. Manger (all other photos).