

community report



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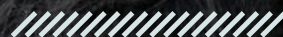
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message *from the* dean

2023 has been an extraordinarily busy year here at the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM). It was dedicated to meticulously planning for our expansion on top of our everyday work. It is exciting to think that in fall 2025, double the number of students will be preparing for their careers in Veterinary Medicine through our faculty. Work is well underway to expand our program with a revised curriculum being finalized and a new 70,000 feet building dedicated to student learning under construction.

As of December 2023, it has been five years since the University of Calgary was gifted W.A. Ranches. It has already become a space for research, teaching and learning, community engagement and outreach, not just for the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine but also other faculties. We are planning to build on this to maximise the use of this wonderful gift.

Growth and change are exciting and challenging at the same time, and I would like to use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to everyone within and outside of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine who is helping us to do our part to address the veterinary needs in Alberta and beyond.

This Community Report is a testament to the stories that unfolded throughout 2023 at UCVM and out in the community. It showcases the collective efforts of the faculty its remarkable achievements in 2023. As we move into 2024, we look forward to continuing to make a significant impact to society by fostering talent and creating innovative solutions to today's problems. Thank you for being a part of our narrative and contributing to the continued success of the faculty.

Dean Renate Weller
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine





Renate Weller receives the medal from Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation Nate Horner

UCalgary initiative to address veterinarian shortage earns medal

Vet Med dean credits team effort for award of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal

When Dr. Renate Weller opened the email saying she was to receive Alberta's Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal for her "significant contributions to Alberta" — helping increase the number of veterinarians — she had to read the message twice.

"I first thought, honestly, is this real? They can't mean me!" Weller says. "It's like a team sport where you have a whole team on the pitch, a whole support team around you, and you score the goal and everyone cheers. This is an honour not of me, but credit goes to the whole team that's addressing this challenge."

That challenge is dealing with the critical shortage of veterinary professionals not only in the province, but also across the country and around the world. Having too few veterinarians in Alberta threatens the health of domestic animals and livestock and also the province's animal production industry and public health. "There are many animals that require veterinary care, ranging from pets for our enjoyment and well-being, animals that work for us such as service dogs and horses, and animals that feed us, such as beef, dairy, poultry and pork," Weller says.

"This constitutes a massive economic factor in Alberta. Let's not forget the importance veterinarians play in ensuring food safety and working closely with our human counterparts in protecting the population from zoonotic diseases.

As Weller started her role as UCVm dean in 2021, the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (ABVMA) had just published a thorough analysis of the issues surrounding the shortage.

"I was asked by the government how the faculty can contribute to solve it. One of the ministers rang me and said, 'Okay, we have this shortage. What can we do? What's the solution to the problem?'"

Scholars and staff at UCVm worked closely with the ABVMA to come up with a six-initiative plan to address the veterinarian shortage in Alberta. With the help of \$59 million in provincial funding, "We have started delivering on this," she says.

One aspect of the plan already underway is increasing the number of students UCVm accepts every year into its DVM program and ensuring it's ready to accept 100 students annually by 2025.

"We are running as fast as we can," says Weller. "We will open our doors in September 2025 to double the number of students. The degree in veterinary medicine is a four-year program so it takes a while for those people to hit the market. In the meantime, we are working with the ABVMA, employers and rural municipalities to get a recruitment, onboarding and mentorship program going that will allow us to bring international veterinarians in to alleviate the problem in the short term."

The Platinum Jubilee medal, awarded to Weller, recognizes these efforts. Weller plans to display the medal "somewhere where everyone can see it," with a sign that says: "This is a team award."

***"This is a team
award"***



community

by the numbers

Outreach Events

20,000+ | People reached

- Youth engagement with agriculture
- Indigenous engagement & two-way exchange of knowledge
- International conferences
- Summer camps
- W.A. Ranches tours

Signature UCVM Hosted Events

1,098 | People attended

- Calgary International Equine Symposium
- Canadian Emerging Veterinary Scholars Summit
- UCVM Awards Night
- Graduation Banquet
- Alumni Event
- Welcome Back BBQ
- Spring Luncheon
- Retirement Celebration
- Winter Wonderland Celebration

Communication



781 | Mentions and stories in the media



40,000+ | Post views



1

1

2

The International Equine Symposium brought together world experts over two days

3

Ten days of outreach at the Calgary Stampede, the world's largest rodeo



2



3



4



5

4

5

6

Canadian Emerging Veterinary Scholars Summit was attended by all five Canadian vet schools + two UK students



6

8

Vet med students get hands-on experience in the community



Nine third-year University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine students were given the opportunity partner with CUPS Pet Health Clinics. This partnership helps CUPS clients – people who have experienced homelessness or are at risk of it – by offering them free pet care. It's also a valuable opportunity for the students to practice their professional and communication skills in a community setting. Students provide a wellness visit, pet health education, preventive medicine, and limited basic veterinary care.

“Being able to help an animal and their owner means a lot to me. It feels like I am actually making a difference”

This program has now taken place for nine years under the supervision of UCVM staff Dr. Serge Chalhoub, DVM, Dr. Jack Wilson, DVM, and Dr. Ross Duncan, DVM, along with a UCVM veterinary technician and CUPS staff.

Students are set in three groups of three, all under the supervision of a UCVM faculty member. Each student has the chance to lead the conversation with a prospective client, while one takes notes, and the third student holds and comforts the animal. They then rotate as a new client arrives for their appointment. They are all a team and all there to support one another.

“Being able to help an animal and their owner means a lot to me. It feels like I am actually making a difference,” says UCVM student Seth Colby.

Fellow student Lynn Thiessen agrees: “This is such a cool program, and I am excited to be a part of it.”

Vet med-Stoney Nakoda Nation partnership expands to include *1st preventive vet clinic event in the Nation*



Over eight appointment-filled days in March, University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine faculty, staff, alumni, and volunteers offered preventive veterinary medical services for dogs and cats in the Stoney Nakoda community.

The teams saw more than 300 dogs and cats, brought to the Chief Goodstoney Rodeo Centre by their guardians.

This is the first time UCVM has held a preventive veterinary clinic event in the community and builds off multiple years of fostering relationships between UCVM and community members. Hopes are to build from the success of this first clinic event and be able to provide preventive veterinary services twice a year (spring and fall) going forward.

"I heard about the program from my cousin who also lives in the community," says Willard Lefthand, owner of a one-year-old tabby cat named Sarge. "So far, this process has been great. My cat has been well taken care of and he loves the attention."

UCVM has been working on building a relationship with the Stoney Nakoda Nation since 2017 by working with an advisory council of local Elders and knowledge keepers to understand what a partnership around animal health could look like. The faculty has also engaged with the local schools to bring veterinary sciences into the classroom in interactive and hands-on ways.

Discussions with community members over the years highlighted barriers to accessing veterinary care for their animals, including transportation and financial barriers, as well as concerns around trust.

"A lot of community consultation occurred prior to this first clinic event," says UCVM postdoctoral scholar and lead organizer Dr. Tessa Baker, DVM. "It was important for us to understand what barriers community members face in accessing care so that we could offer the preventive veterinary care clinic in the most appropriate way. Like, giving clients the option of doing a house call for animals that are difficult to transport into a physical clinic location, or supporting clients with a ride to the clinic location with their animals."





Indigenous

Engagement

Preventive Veterinary Care Community Clinics



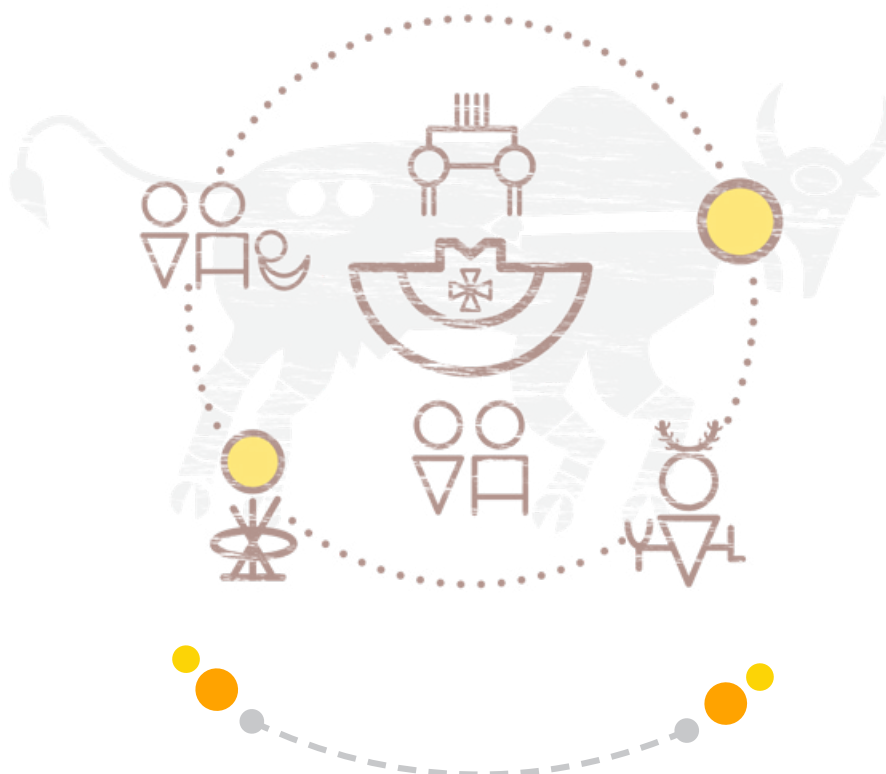
608

| Dogs and cats were
provided services



230

| Clients
served







Vet med profs give injured bobcat *a second chance at life*

In the community of Chaparral, a two-year-old female bobcat became trapped in a local bear trap. The bobcat, who weighed in at 7.78 kilograms, seemed to have been living well in and around the southeast Calgary community before she was caught in the trap. Community members had named her Bobbi.

It took two weeks for members of the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society (CWRS) to capture her to see what they could do to help.

To safely remove the trap from her paw, Dr. Jordan Greenfield of the CWRS first sedated Bobbi. He sutured and bandaged her paw, and also noted Bobbi had a fractured canine tooth.

On Jan. 27, Dr. Aylin Atilla, VMD, and Dr. Rebecca Jackson, DVM, of the University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) helped to re-assess the paw at the wildlife centre along with Greenfield.



Unfortunately, given the extensive damage from the trap, the team had to amputate the distal digits on Bobbi's left front paw. They also made a plan to address the broken tooth.

"The tooth was fractured with complete exposure of the pulp canal," says Jackson, who extracted the tooth on Feb. 16.

"The sensitive nerves of the tooth live in the pulp canal and so this injury would be extremely painful."

"Regardless of her final release location, I am happy that the CWFS and our partners, like UCVm, can provide her with a pain-free experience."

While Jackson extracted the tooth, Atilla and Greenfield examined the healing paw wound. They determined it is healing properly but will need continued monitoring.

"This is why we came into this field," says Atilla. She explains how rewarding it is to help such an underserved population of animals such as wildlife.

"Bobbi still has a road to recovery to walk, but I am confident we took a great step in helping her today with the removal of the fractured tooth," says Greenfield. "Next comes the physical rehabilitation and testing of her hunting ability with her reconstructed paw."

"Regardless of her final release location, I am happy that the CWFS and our partners, like UCVm, can provide her with a pain-free experience."





clinical & teaching

by the numbers



Faculty Members
working in and providing
expertise to nine different
Alberta Clinics



- Accredited by the CVMA/AVMA Council on Education
- Internationally known for innovative use of simulators
- Integrated research in DVM training
- Extensive community-based experiential learning in fourth year



students

by the numbers

DVM Program (Classes of 2024 - 2027)



210

Current DVM
students across the
four years



15+

Student clubs



31

UCalgary & UCVM
awards given to vet
students

Supporting Alberta

71%

Of our DVM
Graduates are
working in Alberta

47%

Work in small
communities
throughout Alberta

43%

Work in large urban
communities in
Alberta



500,000+

Hours of service provided by
DVM graduates in 2023

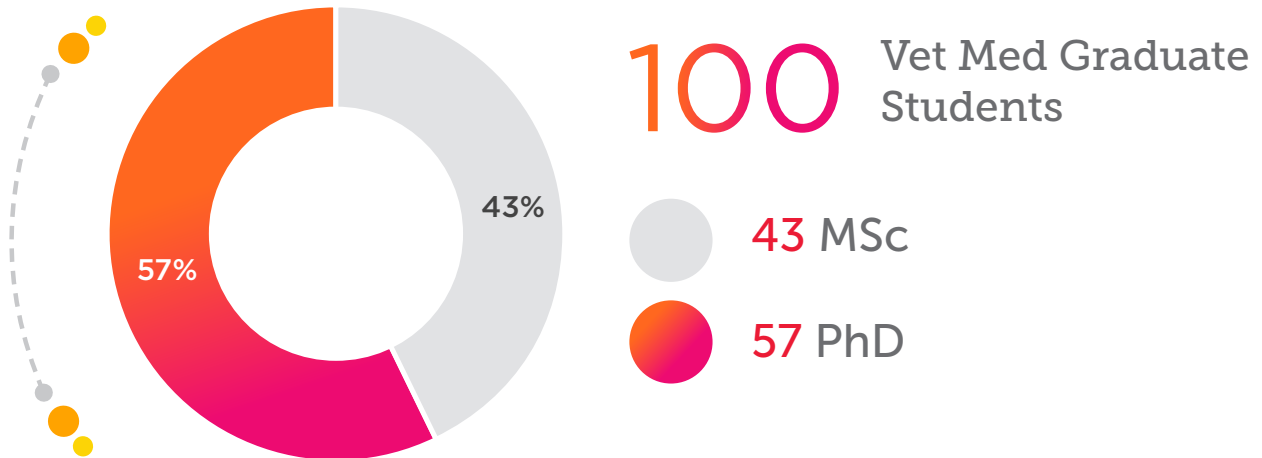




students

by the numbers

Graduate Students



32

Awards received
by Graduate
Students



67

International
Graduate Students
from 40+ different
schools



30+

Graduate Students
from other diverse
study areas



Alumni



555

Alumni

60

Alumni attended
UCVM events

Distributed Veterinary Learning Community (DVLC)



96

Partner practices in the
community where students get
hands on experience

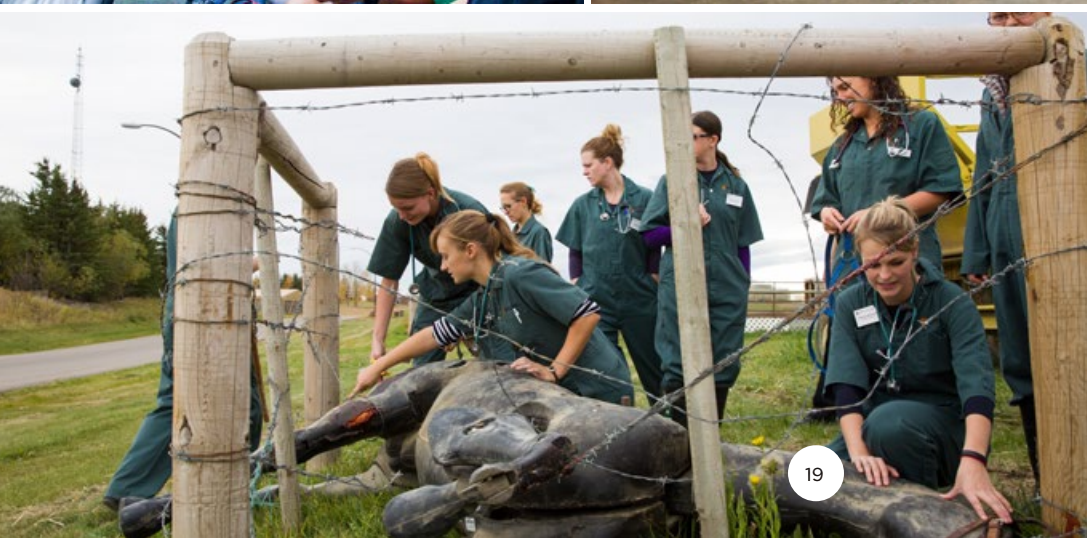


1,210

Weeks of completed student
rotations at partner practices



student *life*

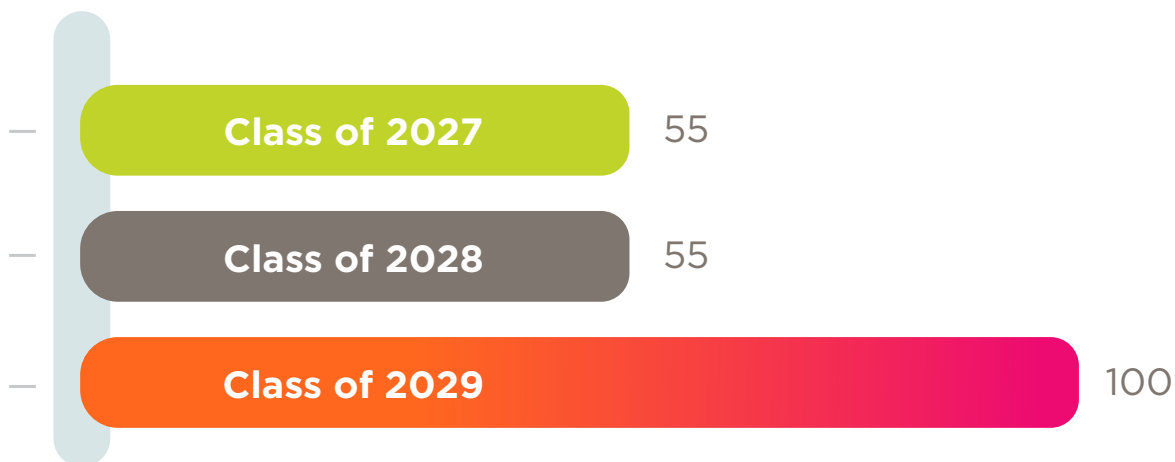




class expansion



UCVM is expanding our class size to 100 students starting in the fall of 2025. With this class expansion comes the opportunity and obligation to reassess our curriculum. UCVM graduates will meet the diverse veterinary needs of all Alberta, now and in the future.



Number of graduating students



What are our goals for the curriculum?

- 1 Develop veterinarians who are successful across the breadth of career opportunities within Alberta and beyond
- 2 Continue to produce veterinarians who can serve the rural, equine, and production animal needs of Alberta
- 3 Provide an educational experience that:
 - Allows graduates to succeed on the first day of graduation. Serves as a robust foundation for graduates to continue their ongoing professional development
 - Support a culture of compassionate wellbeing to facilitate long term job satisfaction while concurrently combating professional attrition
 - Contribute to greater opportunities for equity, diversity, inclusivity, and reconciliation both within the UCVM and the profession as a whole
 - Be nimble and open to iterative change so we can rapidly adapt our educational offerings in light of current and future challenges

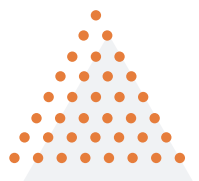
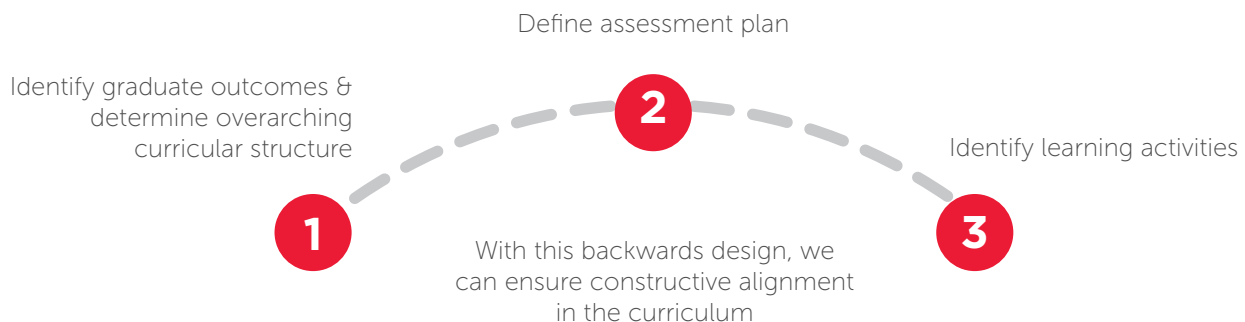
How are we moving forward?

We connected with and listened to all staff, students and faculty at UCVM who wanted to participate in the revision. We also hosted consultations with representatives of almost all facets of veterinary medicine in Alberta.



200+

External people were engaged with while revising the curriculum.





diagnostic services unit

by the numbers

The Diagnostic Services Unit (DSU) offers fee-for-service veterinary anatomic pathology, histopathology, cytology, and bacteriology services to the veterinary community and researchers.

\$2.2M

Secured in external funding
for DSU expansion and
ongoing operations

2,801

Total DSU submissions
(diagnostic and research)

26%

Growth in submissions
compared to 2022

47

Disease investigations
supported through the UCVM
Veterinary Outbreak
Investigation Service (VOIS)

Research at the DSU



63

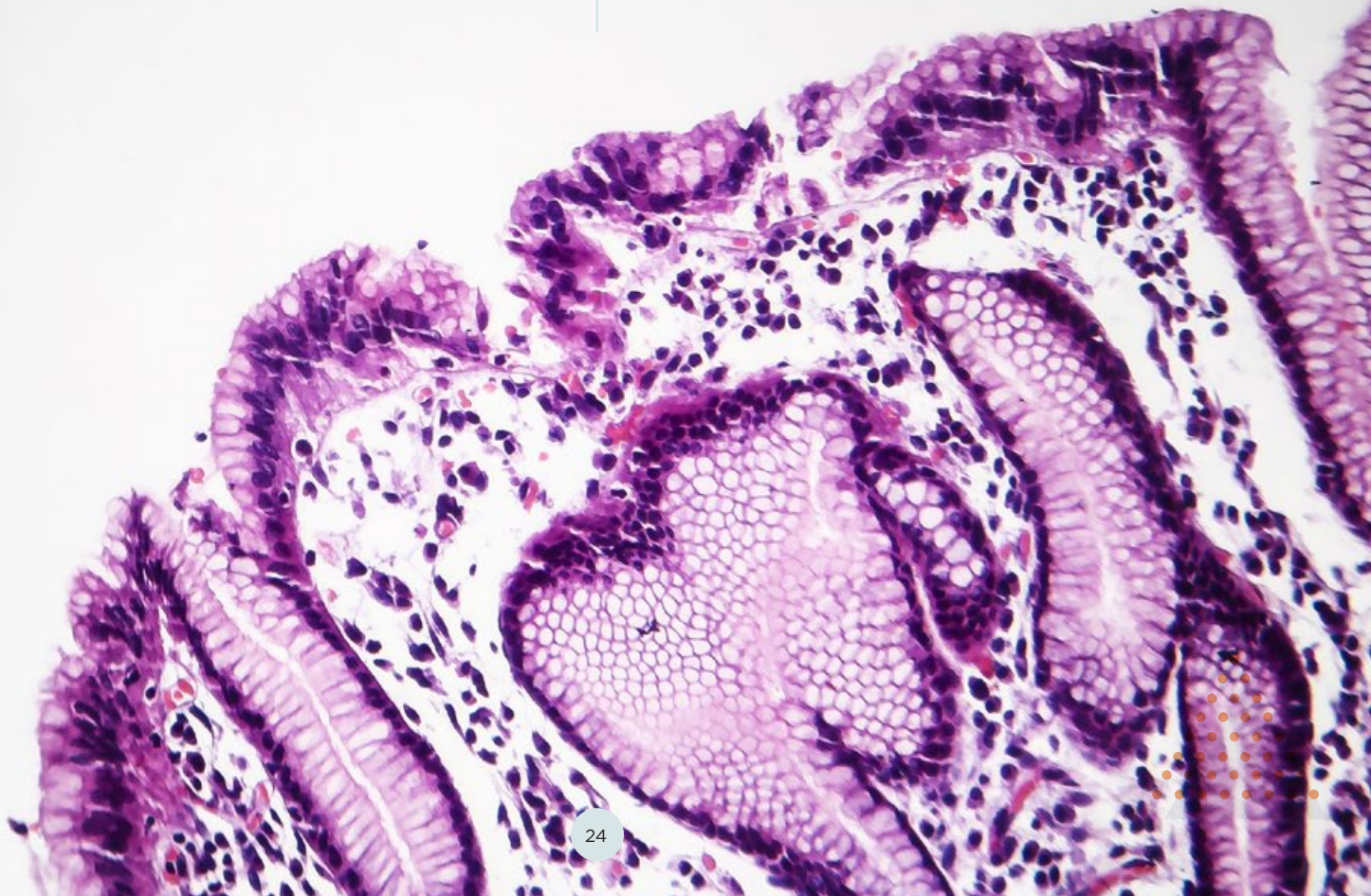


Unique research projects
ongoing

411



Research submissions
investigated by the DSU





research

by the numbers



229

Number of peer
reviewed publications
in 2023



\$14M+

Sponsored research
funding



98

Different sources of
sponsored research
funding



300+

Active research
projects



60

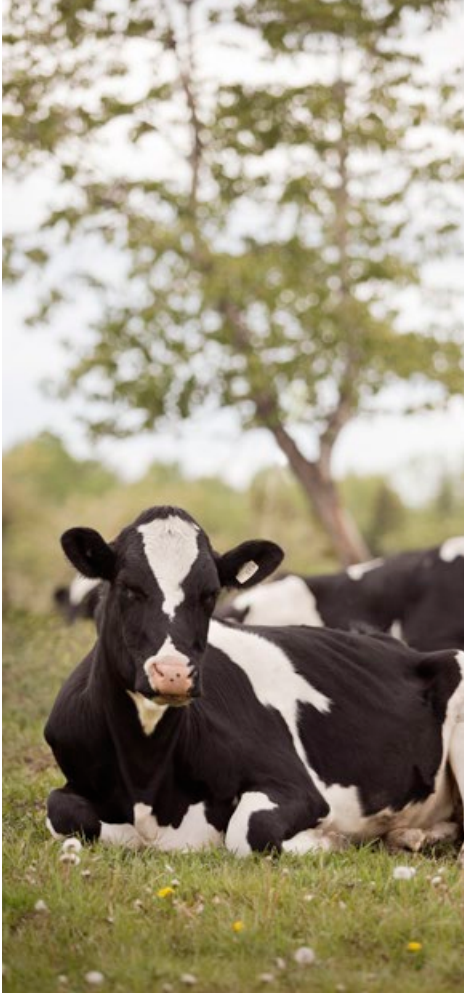
Research associates,
Technicians &
Postdocs



55

Faculty
members who
participate in
research





Cattle Health Research Group (CHRG)

CHRG supports animal well-being and sustainable production of safe meat and milk. We tackle health challenges through innovative research and education, specifically for Alberta's beef and dairy industries. Our research areas include infectious diseases, disease control, lameness (with a focus on digital dermatitis), neurological and metabolic disorders, and nutrition-related diseases.



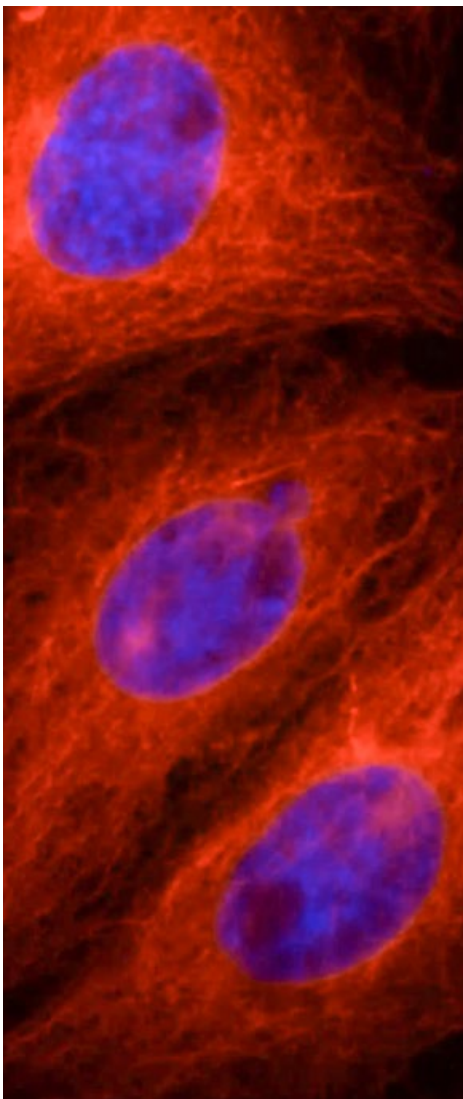
Clinical and Translational Research Group (CTRG)

CTRG is a diverse group of researchers focused on disease prevention, animal welfare, and applying research to practical use. We conduct basic and clinical research, collaborate with experts, and engage with the community to address their needs. Our goal is to translate research into practical clinical applications.



Infection Biology Research Group (INBIO)

INBIO facilitates infectious disease research by uniting researchers, fostering collaboration, and providing training. We focus on molecular and cellular aspects, including disease pathogenesis, genomics, immunology, and diagnostics.



Reproduction and Regenerative Medicine Research Group (RRM)

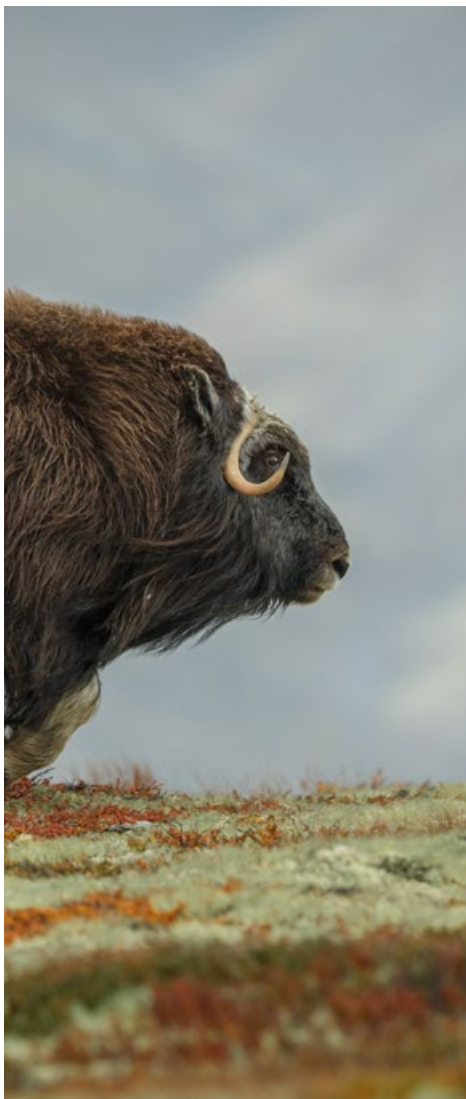
RRM brings together experts from veterinary and human medicine, stem cell biology, reproductive biology, and bioengineering. Our aim is to apply scientific discoveries to improve food production and animal welfare. Our research focuses on pluripotent stem cells, tissue-specific stem cell biology, tissue bioengineering, stem cell bioprocessing, and placental development.





One Health Research Group (OHRG)

One Health is a transdisciplinary approach to address issues that emanate from the interaction of animals, humans, and their environment. The One Health Research Group (OHRG) brings together a broad group of researchers at the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and our many collaborators from beyond these walls who use One Health approaches to address complex issues.



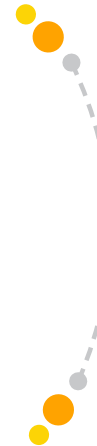
Wildlife Health and Ecology Research Group (WHERG)

WHERG focuses on wildlife population health using ecological approaches. Our research areas include wildlife health ecology, ecotoxicology, parasitology, wildlife endocrinology, and vector ecology.



Veterinary Education Research Group (VERG)

Our experts and researchers collaborate globally across specialties to support the DVM program. We conduct evidence-based research to guide best practices in veterinary education, including communication skills, augmented learning, service-learning, competence assessment, admissions, clinical skills, and simulation.





awards



100+

Internal and External
Awards Received

50

Research
Awards



1

Kaitlyn Lomsnes: Oakwood Foundation Scholarship by The Foundation for the Horse – recognizing outstanding veterinary students who are dedicated to equine practice

2

Nicole Phillips: UCalgary vet med student was the first Canadian to win prestigious U.S. Coyote Rock Ranch scholarship for dedication to equine medicine

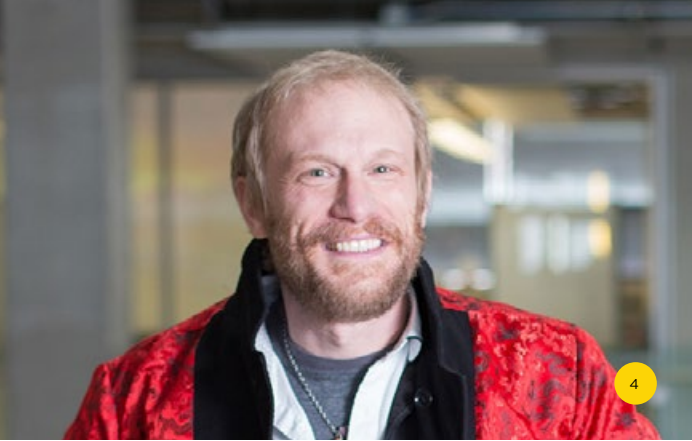
3

Tshering Choden: Gustav Rosenberger Memorial Fund Award for driving progress in bovine medicine



3





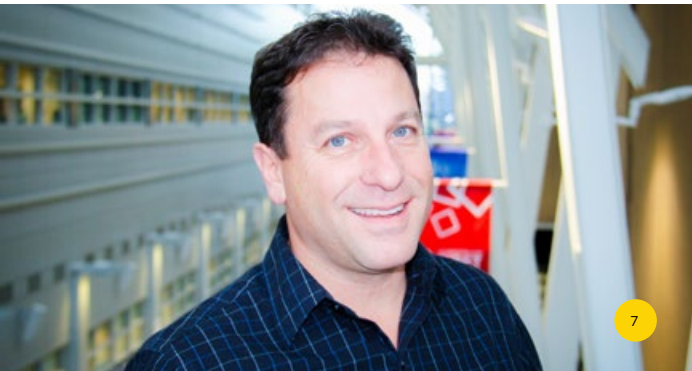
4

Dr. Søren Boysen: 2023 Dr. Jack Mara Scientific Achievement Award for "Advances in Point of Care Ultrasound"



5

Dr. John Gilleard: 2023 AAVP-Boehringer Ingelheim Distinguished Veterinary Parasitologist Award



6

Vladimir Tadic: 2023 Merck Animal Health Bovine Veterinary Student Recognition Award from The American Association of Bovine Practitioners Foundation for bovine excellence



6



8

7

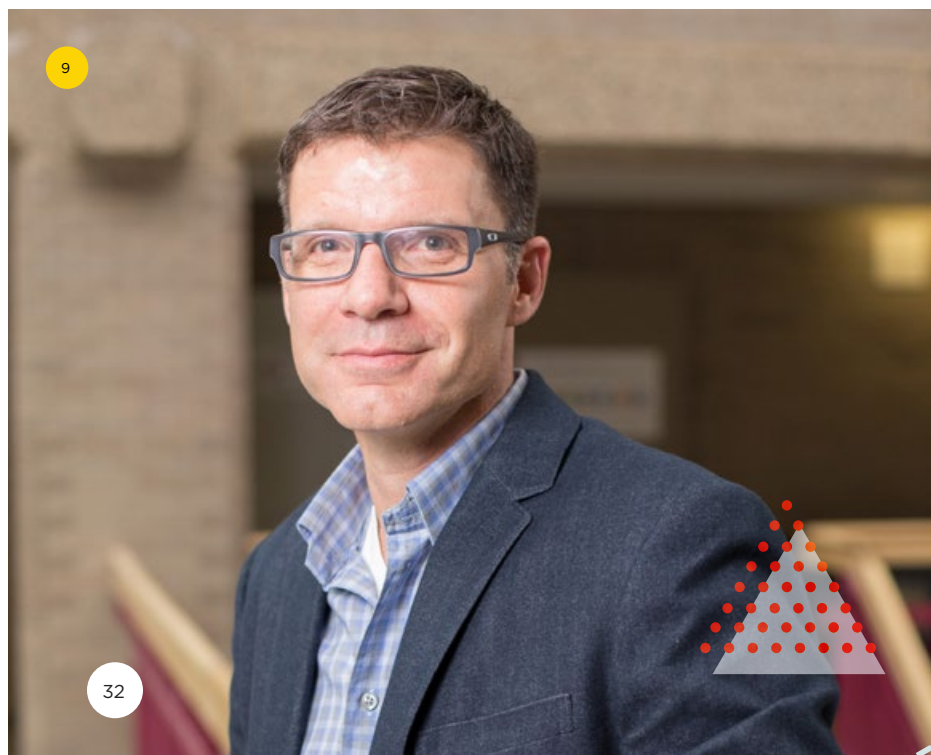
Dr. Doug Whiteside: 2023 Presidential Service Award by the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians

8

Caroline Beninger: Amstutz Scholarship and the Bovine Veterinary Student Recognition Award from the American Association of Bovine Practitioners

9

Dr. Kent Hecker: Inaugural Chief Assessment Officer for the International Council for Veterinary Assessment and the only Canadian to be selected as a Distinguished Expert for the Academy of Veterinary Educators



9



W.A. Ranches



North America's biggest outdoor classroom

//////
In 2023 we celebrated the five year anniversary of the ranch donation from the Anderson-Chisholm family.



19,000

Acres of
Land



1,000

Head of
Cattle

"People are amazed by their generosity, as I am, every day. I love that the work I'm doing here today is opening doors for the next generation, while maintaining the vision of using a working cow-calf ranch to create opportunities for hands-on training, youth education and research in animal welfare. That gives me energy.

With this 'living lab' comes opportunity for university-wide collaborative research, as well as mutually beneficial outreach to the cattle community, including to veterinarians and other ranchers."

Dr. Ed Pajor, PhD
W.A. Ranches Director
Professor of Animal Behaviour and Welfare





donor

updates



The success of our Veterinary School relies on the support of our communities, industry partners and donors. Simply put, we could not do what we do without support from people, Foundations and businesses like you! We are on track to reach over \$2,000,000 in gifts for UCVM by the end of this fiscal year. This year, gifts to UCVM have supported a variety of areas like research, event sponsorship, faculty positions and donations of equipment, food and medicine.

We received support from over 100 unique donors this year, and secured eight new students awards which will be awarded starting in the 2024-2025 academic school year.

We have begun fundraising for our Community Care Clinic, which will offer new hands-on learning opportunities for our growing number of students, while also offering low-cost pet care to our community's pet owners in need. We wish to thank our community partners for their support and wisdom as we move forward with this fundraising campaign.

We also worked hard this year to revamp our Pet Memorial Program and look forward to watching this unique and important program grow in 2024.

It has been five years since the University of Calgary was gifted W.A. Ranches. It has already become a space for research, teaching and learning, community engagement and outreach. We are excited to continue to advance capital projects, research and education at W.A. Ranches with the help of our partners.

Lastly, we created a new Indigenous Initiatives Fund that will support our indigenous partnerships, youth outreach and UCVM-led free community clinics in Albertan Indigenous communities. We hope this fund will continue to grow as we work to advance Indigenous focused learning in a good way.

Whether you supported UCVM this year by volunteering, advising, or making a gift, I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks on behalf of the dean, faculty, staff and students at UCVM.

Sarah Parker
Director of Development
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine



\$2M+

Gifts
received



100+

Unique
donors



8

New student
awards
(two endowed)

new UCVI Indigenous Initiatives Fund

Fund supports initiatives at UCVI that strengthen connections with Indigenous communities around Calgary and across the province, by working together on educational initiatives, curriculum development, and inclusion and support of Indigenous students.



health *funds*



Bovine Health Fund

The Bovine Health Fund supports bovine education, clinical and diagnostic activities, and research efforts within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. By supporting academic studies, and educational, diagnostic, and clinical activities related to cattle, you will directly impact both animal and human health, as well as Alberta's economy.



Companion Animal Health Fund

The Companion Animal Health Fund supports companion animal education, clinical and diagnostic activities, and research efforts within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. By supporting academic studies, and educational, diagnostic, and clinical activities related to dogs, cats, and other small pets, you can directly impact both animal and human health.



Equine Health Fund

The Equine Health Fund supports equine education, clinical and diagnostic activities, and research efforts within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. By supporting the UCVF Equine Health fund you play a critical role in advancing our understanding of equine health.





UCVM Indigenous Initiatives Fund

Fund supports initiatives at UCVI that strengthen connections with Indigenous communities around Calgary and across the province, by working together on educational initiatives, curriculum development, and inclusion and support of Indigenous students.



Wildlife Health Fund

Support to the UCVI Wildlife Health Fund plays a critical role in advancing our understanding of wildlife health, ecology, and conservation. Gifts to the fund will support research, and best-in-class teaching and learning leading to new knowledge to better serve our community.





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