Donors and supporters of the new Valentine Charlton Cat Centre enjoyed an evening preview of this recently completed veterinary teaching facility on 23 September. Speakers included the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gavin Brown, Mr Rob Ferguson, Chair of the Veterinary Science Foundation’s fundraising campaign, and University Veterinary Centre Sydney Director, Associate Professor Geraldine Hunt. The waiting and reception area proved to have excellent acoustics when the presentations were followed by a performance of Rossini’s Cat Duet by sopranos (and cat-lovers) Linda Barcan and Jane Parkin, and pianist Andrew Basile (below right).

The new cat centre is the first part of a staged redevelopment of the University Veterinary Centre Sydney. The opening of the new building is reflective of the Faculty’s continuing commitment to feline medicine, with Dr Vanessa Barrs already on staff and fellow feline specialist, Dr Julia Beatty, due to begin in November.

The Veterinary Science Foundation is now raising funds for Stage 2, the Dog Centre. For further details and information on how you can contribute please contact Jennie Churchill on 02 9351 8024.
**From the rumenations’ desk**

With Professor Leo Jeffcott taking up his position as Dean, the Faculty took the opportunity at the end of last month to thank previous Acting Dean, Professor Paul Canfield, for his leadership of the Faculty over the last year and a half.

A surprise party, held on 30 September, saw the Faculty come together to acknowledge Paul’s contribution and tireless commitment to the Faculty and its staff. Professor Chis Maxwell, Associate Dean for Staff and Students, led the speeches as members of staff took the opportunity to give their personal thanks.

The Veterinary Science Foundation would also like to thank Professor Canfield for his contributions to this newsletter.

**Australian veterinary schools accreditation visit**

The Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee will visit the Faculty from 13-15 October to evaluate years 3, 4 and the lecture-free final year of the new undergraduate program. The committee will focus on the implementation and evaluation of the new curriculum, and will also follow up recommendations from its previous visit in September 2001.

This year’s team consists of VSAAC Chair, Dr John Craven, and Executive Officer, Ms Julie Strouss, with Massey University Professor, Tony Charleston. Visiting the Sydney and Camden campuses they will talk to staff about innovations and developments in veterinary education, interview staff and students, and inspect facilities, including the new B Richards Pathology Laboratory, the Valentine Charlton Cat Centre and the renovated horse facilities at the University Veterinary Centre Camden.

Contacts for coordination of the visit are Ms Meg Vost and Associate Professor Rosanne Taylor, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning.

**Vice Chancellor’s inaugural award**

The Faculty’s Year 5 Extramural Support Team - Dr John Baguley (right), Associate Professor Bob Ratcliffe, Professor Dave Hodgson, Dr Graham Feletti, Ms Melanie Robson, Gerard Marcus, Federico Costa, Angelika Trube - have received the inaugural Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Support of the Student Experience.

The award acknowledges a tremendous amount of work by the team in facilitating the Faculty’s pioneering Year 5 curriculum, allowing students a lecture-free final year and the opportunity to gain valuable experience through clinical rotations in practices across Australia and overseas.

The selection panel was impressed with the team nature of the project with academic staff, general staff and practitioners all contributing. The Chair also commented on the project’s innovative use of IT, which enabled effective communication and encouraged reciprocal input, and the international opportunities incorporated in the course that aligned with the University’s goals.

This is the second acknowledgement for the Faculty by the Vice-Chancellor’s office with Dr Jacqui Norris and Associate Professor Jennie Hodgson receiving an award for Outstanding Teaching earlier this year.

We want your feedback and contributions. Contact the newsletter team on email vsf@vetsci.usyd.edu.au, phone or Zara Gosson, VSF Project Coordinator, on 9351 8026.