It is great to be able to report that the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Sydney, was successful in its bid for American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accreditation. We now join an elite group of vet schools outside North America that have achieved this status - there are currently only six other veterinary schools outside the USA and Canada that are accredited.

This is a tremendous milestone for the Faculty – international accreditation will have a significant impact on both the Faculty and its graduates.

The AVMA’s Council on Education, recognised by the US Department of Education, acts as the accrediting agency for 30 faculties of veterinary medicine in the United States and Canada. In recent years, the AVMA has encouraged accreditation of veterinary schools outside North America including Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Currently, Murdoch and Massey are the only two accredited schools in Australasia, and there are three in the UK (London, Edinburgh and Glasgow) and Utrecht, in The Netherlands.

The process of AVMA accreditation is rigorous and demanding. The Sydney bid took four years to complete, involved the submission of a Self Evaluation Report on the Faculty’s educational program, and two detailed visits to the University took place in April 2002 and April 2005. The 2005 visit was undertaken by a team of seven including representatives from the States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that the highest quality of veterinary education exists in the Faculty. The site team measure this by the critical evaluation of 11 specific standards ranging from organisational structure to an outcomes assessment of the course. We received commendations in all 11 standards except one, finances. However, the AVMA team recognised our efforts to supplement the Faculty budget from student fees, research income, clinical services and fundraising by the Veterinary Science Foundation, and strongly encouraged the University to review its funding formula to recognise the high cost of clinical teaching. They were highly complimentary of our students and the dedication of all our staff, and were particularly impressed with the content and assessment of the new curriculum.

The result of our application came through from the AVMA on 25 October 2005 after a recommendation from the Division of Education and Research was approved by the Council on Education. The importance and value of our AVMA accreditation can be summarised as follows:

- The kudos of being benchmarked against some of the top Vet Schools in North America. Quality assurance in tertiary education is of utmost importance and this means we are effectively benchmarked against the best in the world - North America through AVMA, Europe through the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and Australasia through the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council.

- A much needed confirmation that the rigorous and innovative planning of the new curriculum has been successful and that it is appropriately aligned to learning outcomes and graduate attributes. The AVMA were particularly impressed with the final year program and could see its attempts to improve the transition of undergraduates to professional life in practice.

- An enhanced ability to attract international students to our program, particularly from North America, as it means the Sydney BVSc degree is much more registrable when these graduates go home.

The result also means that, along with planned improvements to the infrastructure of both the Sydney and Camden campuses and the progressive rise in our research profile, we are now in sight of the University’s vision for 1:5:40 (to be the first in Australia, the top 5 in the region and the top 40 in the world).

Finally, we are proud of our achievement in gaining AVMA accreditation and believe it puts the Faculty of Veterinary Science where it needs to be - in the limelight!
Visiting Professor from Zurich

Professor Hans Lutz, Head of the Clinical Laboratory, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zurich, visited the Faculty on 2 November to speak with staff about areas relevant to Zurich such as the curriculum, teaching and learning practices, and funding. He also specifically wanted to look at how the Faculty operates across its two campuses at Sydney and Camden. The University of Zurich has recently merged its two veterinary schools based at Berne and Zurich – a similar distance apart as Sydney and Camden – and Professor Lutz is a member of the team responsible for combining their operations.

During his visit Professor Lutz delivered a seminar to staff and students on his current research work, “Infectious diseases in free ranging lions and the recent die-off in the Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania”. With the focus of his work on felines – currently the larger variety - he took the opportunity to tour the University Veterinary Centre Sydney’s state-of-the-art Valentine Charlton Cat Centre, meeting with our feline specialists Drs Vanessa Barrs and Jules Beatty (far left), and feline medicine resident Dr Amy Lingard (far right).

Post Graduate Conference

The 2005 Post Graduate Conference was held at the Plant Breeding Institute, Camden on 31 October and 1 November. Over 50 PhD students presented their research projects to an audience of staff, students and supervisors, and participants also displayed posters of their projects.

Attendees had the special opportunity to hear guest ‘inspirational speaker’ Professor John Egerton, a leading foot rot researcher and retired Faculty staff member.

The conference was generously sponsored by the Dairy Research Foundation, Meat and Livestock Australia, Australian Poultry CRC and Invasive Animals CRC, with their funding supporting the students through prizes for the best presentations in each session and the best poster.

The 2005 winners were:
- **Marie Bhanugopan** - Effect of supplementation of potassium on calcium and magnesium metabolism during the peri-parturient period in the dairy cow
- **Kerry Daly** - Out Of The Pouch – Immunobiology of the mammary gland of the Tammar Wallaby (Macropus eugenii)
- **Evelyn Hall** - Milking the data
- **Jaclyn Aldenhoven** - Natural boundaries to feral pig dispersal and population structuring
- **Kao Castle** - Investigating the genetic component of equine osteochondrosis
- **Nicole Spiegel** - Defining metabolic indicators for the variation in kangaroo meat eating quality
- **Simon De Graaf** - Birth of offspring of pre-determined sex after artificial insemination of frozen-thawed, sex-sorted And re-frozen-thawed ram spermatozoa
- **Leng Huat Foo** - Vitamin D status in healthy Chinese adolescent girls: relationship to muscle strength, serum parathyroid hormone and physical activity
- **Jaclyn Aldenhoven** – best poster.

Staff Promotions

The following five Faculty candidates were all successful in achieving promotion to Senior Lecturer:
- Dr Sue Hemsley (Veterinary Anatomy and Pathology),
- Dr Mark Krockenberger (Veterinary Pathology),
- Dr Jacqui Norris (Veterinary Microbiology and Animal Disease),
- Dr Paul Sheehy (Cell Biology) and
- Dr Imke Tammen (Animal Biotechnology)

Veterinary Science Foundation special gala fundraising concert
1 December 2005
Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Don’t miss the opportunity to see this unique once-only performance by the Australian Youth Orchestra with superb soloists …
- leading harpist Marshall McGuire
- mezzo-soprano Suzanne Johnston
- soprano Christine Douglas
- Riley Lee, Australia’s only Grand Master of the exquisite Japanese bamboo flute, the shakuhachi.

In a musical celebration of the animal kingdom

For further information and to book concert tickets or purchase raffle tickets contact (02) 9351 8026 or email vsf@vetsci.usyd.edu.au

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Full details at www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/Foundation

We want your feedback and contributions.
Contact the newsletter team on email vsf@vetsci.usyd.edu.au, or phone Zara Gosson on (02) 9351 8026.