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2014 APVMA Symposium: A Review
By Kim Strait

On March 21st-23rd, 500 pre-veterinary students from across the nation gathered at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ames, Iowa for the 2014 APVMA Symposium! Held annually, the APVMA Symposium is an opportunity for pre-veterinary students and their advisors to come together, learn novel techniques in the field, and even get hands-on experience from unique wet labs. Students are also able to speak with representatives from other national and international veterinary schools and organizations attending and sponsoring the symposium. Although it is a jam-packed weekend of learning and networking, there is room to have some fun as well! Friday night the Pre-Vet Olympics act as a way to make new friends and engage in friendly competition. Saturday night tops off the symposium with a DJ to help dance the night away!

Friday Night: The Banquet Dinner and Pre-Vet Olympics

The 2014 APVMA Symposium was kicked off Friday evening with a welcoming banquet at the conference hotel. Attendees heard from the Iowa State Pre-Vet Club planning committee co-chairs, the APVMA Executive Board, and representatives from Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. The Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine sponsored the banquet dinner Friday night, and Dr. Alex Ramirez and Dr. June Olds spoke about their paths to veterinary medicine while students enjoyed their meals!

Students ended the night with the Pre-Vet Olympics, where they were able to compete in a variety of games for prizes. Trivia, a “pig” obstacle course, anatomy, animal charades, and a bag toss were just a few games that attendees competed in, and the Wolf pack from North Carolina State University ultimately took home the win!

Saturday: Events at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine

Saturday morning started very early at 6:30 A.M. with the President’s Meeting. APVMA Members voted on constitution revisions and nominated students for elections to the 2014-2015 Executive Board. The rest of the day at the veterinary school was filled with interactive labs and lectures. Labs and lectures emphasized many different specializations in veterinary medicine, including production, exotic, wildlife, and companion animal medicine, ophthalmology, theriogenology, pathology, and many more. Lectures about preparing for and applying to vet school were also provided, as well as a chance for students to talk to many representatives from 25 different veterinary schools and industry organizations in the sponsor hallway. Finally, students had the opportunity to tour Iowa State’s state-of-the-art facilities such as the new Lloyd Veterinary Medical Center and Hixson-Lied Small Animal Hospital.
Saturday Evening: The Banquet Dinner, Elections, and Dance!

After the long, busy day of labs and lectures, APVMA members returned to the conference hotel to eat and hear from representatives Maria Mancia and Anthony Tadros of Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine, who sponsored the entire dinner. Throughout the dinner, the APVMA Executive Board also hosted elections for the following year and announced winners of club awards and scholarships! To conclude the night, students attended the dance to celebrate the end of another APVMA Symposium.

About the Planning Committee:

For Iowa State University, hosting the 2014 APVMA Symposium took a ton of manpower and hours of planning to make this one of the most successful symposiums in recent years. The committee was led by APVMA Co-Chairs Miranda Buseman (Senior, Animal Science/Pre-Vet), Kesley Aarsvold (Senior, Animal Science/Microbiology), and Kimberly Strait (Sophomore, Dairy Science/Pre-Vet). They headed a planning committee of more than 20 students to coordinate everything from fundraising to transportation needs. Many of them also had sub-committees to help tackle some of the daunting tasks that planning a symposium presented. Club advisors also played a crucial role, not only in hosting laboratories and lectures, but also as a support system and guiding force throughout the planning process.

To set themselves apart from symposiums in years past, the Iowa State Pre-Vet Club members wanted to offer attendees the option to attend two labs and to allow more people to come. They accomplished both of these tasks, with the latter being able to bring 500 pre-veterinary students and their 25 advisers to the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Accomplishing these feats required many student volunteers, who were responsible for assisting students in finding various locations, laboratories, ensuring food was where it was needed, and many other tasks throughout the symposium. Without these dedicated and hard-working individuals, the symposium would not have been such a success.

In the end, everyone involved gained valuable leadership, networking, management skills, and so much more! It was a challenging experience, but one that everyone benefited from.

Thank you!

Finally, the Iowa State Pre-Vet Club would like to thank YOU, the members of the APVMA, for attending the symposium! It is your enthusiasm and passion for veterinary medicine that makes this such a worthwhile and rewarding event, and we hope that the 2014 APVMA Symposium reminded you all why we are pursuing the wonderful career field that is veterinary medicine!

2014 Award Winners

Scholarship Awardees

Sarah Wright
University of Illinois at Urbana
Sarah Wright is a current sophomore studying Animal Sciences with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Sarah is an active member of the Pre-Vet Club at the University of Illinois as well. Sarah has participated in her Pre-Vet Club's Large Animal Intensive Care Unit Program, Small Animal Emergency Care Clinic Program, as well as various wet labs and fundraising opportunities. Sarah's experiences with her Pre-Vet Club have further solidified that a career in veterinary medicine is for her. Sarah also volunteers at the University of Illinois's Veterinary Teaching Hospital's Wildlife Medical Clinic, interns at the Champaign County Humane Society, and participates in undergraduate research in Dr. Kelly Swanson's Laboratory of Nutrition and Nutrigenomics. Sarah hopes to pursue a career in zoo medicine and she is very grateful for the APVMA for awarding her the 2014 Scholarship Award so that she can continue on the path to success.

Melissa Rich
Gettysburg College
I am a senior at a small liberal arts college, Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, PA, where I major in Biology and minor in English. I was a part of the marching band for three years, where I spun flag in the color guard. This year I became involved in dog behavioral research. I have been president of the pre-veterinary club for 3 years, and have loved my time in the position due to the ability to educate others about the profession and expose them to new and unique fields within it. I will be attending Virginia- Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine in the fall, where I plan on tracking mixed animal, with a focus on food animal and equine. In my spare time, I work on a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm where I am the caretaker for poultry, sheep, swine and beef cattle, and enjoy playing with my menagerie of animals. I believe the most important things for someone going into the field are not grades and GRE scores, but an accurate and realistic understanding of the profession and an interest, curiosity and love for and about veterinary medicine.
Outstanding Senior Award

Chelsea Randall
University of Illinois at Urbana
Chelsea Randall is an animal science major with a minor in chemistry at the University of Illinois in Champaign/Urbana. Throughout her undergraduate career, Chelsea has been involved in Pre-Vet Club. During her junior year, she was the program coordinator and was in charge of organizing wet labs, semester-long programs, and the annual trip to symposium. Currently, she is the president of the club. In addition to Pre-Vet Club, Chelsea is an active member in the Wildlife Medical Clinic at the University of Illinois Veterinary School. Through this experience, she has handled raptors, orphans, birds, waterfowl, and other wildlife including bobcats. Over the past years, she has been an extern, volunteer, team leader, and intern at the clinic. She will be starting veterinary school at the University of Illinois next fall. After school, she plans on working in a small animal clinic that also treats exotic animals.

Outstanding Community Service Award

Hope College, Club Animalia
Club Animalia, at Hope College, received the Outstanding Community Service Award this year at the 2014 APVMA Symposium. We are a small club of about 25 active members but with several strong community service projects. Our Zoo-2-You program is a program that brings animals from our college’s animal museum to area elementary schools who cannot afford field trips. This program is in its fourth year and has brought animal education to over half a dozen schools around Holland, Michigan. We also run an education program with our county’s 4H club called Ottawa County 4H Vet Science. Through this program we teach middle and high school students about animal husbandry, veterinary medicine, animal well-being. As you can see, we truly are a club that is dedicated to promoting animal well-being on campus and throughout our community of Holland, Michigan. We also work to create awareness and stimulate interest in careers related to animal care, such as the veterinary field.

Congratulations to all award winners!!

We thank you for all your hard work, you all are very deserving of your awards. We also would like to encourage others to apply next year.
Meet your 2014-2015 Executive Board

Kimberly Strait.................................................................President

Hello everyone! My name is Kimberly Strait, and I am the new APVMA President for the 2014-2015 year. I am currently a sophomore in Dairy Science at Iowa State University, where we recently held the 2014 APVMA Symposium! As a co-chair for the event, I found planning this year’s symposium to be a rewarding experience. Additionally, I truly enjoyed meeting many APVMA members, and we were honored at Iowa State to be able to show you all some of the opportunities that veterinary medicine has to offer!

The end of the symposium signifies the beginning of a new year for the APVMA, and we, the APVMA Executive Board, are looking forward to serving you! Some goals I have in mind for the APVMA include continuing the work of last year’s executive team and really working on connecting APVMA members with the resources they need to excel as pre-veterinary students. We plan to implement the online registration system this year, and we will also be revising our website to make information about opportunities within the APVMA more accessible.

In addition to these goals, the APVMA is already a resource for pre-veterinary students to learn more about opportunities in veterinary medicine and the veterinary school application process. Furthermore, we are a community. I encourage you all to take advantage of what the APVMA has to offer, and I wish you all the best of luck as you pursue your goal of becoming a veterinarian!

Sean Tennant.................................................................Vice President

My name is Sean Tennant, and I am a non-traditional student from St. Petersburg, FL. I am married to a Professional Geologist, and we have a wonderful Perro de Presa Canario that we rescued 8 years ago named Nicholas. I first graduated with a B.A. in Management in 2004 and began a career in real estate sales and finance. Since then I have owned and operated several successful businesses, including a large sport horse breeding and sales operation. I also competed as a professional power lifter, MMA fighter and professional rugby player for many years, representing the United States internationally. Unfortunately I was forced to retire from my athletic career due to injury, and fortunately during my rehabilitation my wife encouraged me to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a veterinarian.

I am a student at St. Petersburg College and the University of South Florida. I am the founder and President of the St. Petersburg College Pre-Vet Club. I am very active in my community, and I am on the Board of Director’s for multiple charitable organizations related to animal welfare. My experience as a pre-veterinary student has been extensive and broad in scope, with time spent at primate sanctuaries, municipal shelters and veterinary clinics to name just few of the experiences. I am an enthusiastic and optimistic member of the APVMA and I look forward to building upon the successes and leadership of last year’s executive board!
Katelyn Jackson……………………………………………………………………..Treasurer

My name is Katelyn Melissa Jackson and I am serving as this year’s APVMA National Treasurer. I was born in Tupelo, Mississippi but grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. I was raised by my parents, David and Missy Jackson, along with my sister Kelsey Jackson. I currently live in Starkville, Mississippi and attend Mississippi State University. I am majoring in Poultry Science with a concentration in Veterinary Medicine. I will be a senior in the fall of 2014 and I am currently planning on applying to veterinary school the summer of 2014.

I was fortunate enough to be Mississippi State University Pre-Veterinary Club’s President for this past year and have recently have been reelected to serve one more year as president. I strive to promote interest in the field of veterinary medicine while helping students get involved within the community. I help organize many different community service events that benefit local humane societies. I have been recognized by Mississippi State University for my hard work and dedication to campus and the Starkville community.

My future goals include attending Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine and become a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Pathologist. I hope to live my dreams by conducting various different types of research after veterinary school. If I do not attend veterinary school right away, I am planning on attending graduate school until acceptance into veterinary school.

By obtaining this position as APVMA National Treasurer, I realize how important it is to put everything you have into your position to benefit pre-veterinary students across the country. I hope to help with the networking of various colleges as well as students. It is a huge honor to become a national officer over such a large organization. I will always strive to do my best while being an APVMA National Officer and hope to expand the organization’s resources!

Meghan Smith……………………………………………………………………..Secretary

Hello everyone, my name is Meghan Smith. I am currently a junior at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, obtaining a major in Biology with a pre-veterinary emphasis and a minor in business. I grew up in the Merrill/Wausau area, on a hobby farm where my love for animals began. I am now currently the president of the UW-Eau Claire Pre-Vet Club and involved in many other organization on my campus including Vice President of Alpha Lambda Delta-Phi Eta Sigma Honors Society and Biology Club. In my free time I work at an animal clinic as the kennel manager, volunteer at the Eau Claire County Humane Association and enjoy ballroom dancing.

I am very honored to be elected as the 2014-2015 APVMA Secretary. I believe I have many skills that will help me succeed as the secretary and improve upon the great job that last year’s executive board has done for this association. I promise to strive to promote the veterinary medicine field, communicate with pre-vet clubs around the nation, and provide helpful insight for those in their journey of applying to veterinary school. Thank you again, and best of luck in pursuing a career in veterinary medicine.
William Willis.................................................................Web Master

Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, I, William M. Willis have been surrounded by the natural world my entire life. In order to achieve my dream of becoming a Wildlife/Zoo veterinarian, I have traveled thousands of miles to Tuskegee University. Currently, I am a sophomore Biology major with a minor in animal science and has maintained a 4.0 GPA during his tenure at Tuskegee. My travels are not limited to Tuskegee. I have travelled to the Galapagos Islands, several countries in Europe, and most recently Ghana in Africa where I studied Wildlife Management. I actively volunteer at the Tuskegee University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, and am a founding member of the Tuskegee chapter of the national society of leadership and success.

By attending an HBCU, historically black college or university, and having international experience, I bring a unique perspective to the APVMA. Although I am busy, I have stayed involved in Social media and computer savvy. As Webmaster, I will strive to help members from around the country connect and collaborate. This may seem daunting but for me, “When there is a WILL, there is a way”.

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