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Dean's Message

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Photo by Lisa Godfrey

Every fall is a renewal. In academics we get many new years and the beginning of the academic year is a source of nostalgia and invigoration. We are all so fortunate to be in an environment to experience this newness year after year.

As always, one of the highlights is our incoming class. The strength of this year's first years is, like all classes, impressive. You'll see on page 22 a few statistics associated with our new students and I am sure you will be as impressed as I. Our admissions team has continued the tradition of admitting the next generation of exemplary veterinary leaders.

As we have weathered the economic downturn, I have often been asked to comment on the last few years, as we have managed through a crisis, emerging with renewed vision and vigor. We feel the worst is behind us, and, on reflection, this magnificent Penn Vet community has again proved its strength. This issue of *Bellwether* highlights many examples of Penn Vet's strength and success, evidence that as an institution and as individuals, we lead in increasing the impact of veterinary medicine.

You'll notice a number of collaborative projects, often led by Penn Vet faculty; vignettes of current students' summers; and the varied roles faculty are playing to ensure public safety and provide guidelines for disaster-relief efforts. The work we do with one another – whether within our own campus, across the wider Penn campus, across the nation or around the world – positions us to continue to lead the way in animal and human health.

One illustration is on page 8. Here, you'll read about just a few of the collaborations underway at Penn Vet. Dr. Charles Vite, assistant professor of neurology, and his work with Dr. Brian Litt, associate professor of neurology and bioengineering at the Perelman School of Medicine, is aiming to find an algorithm that will predict epileptic seizures in dogs and in humans, which has the potential to be life changing for both species. We also look at an example of taking what's learned in the lab to the clinics, as well as how the semi-feral pony herd at New Bolton Center is a shared living lab.

On page 40 you'll read about our strength in attracting the very best clinicians, committed to seeing Ryan Hospital's exotic companion animal service succeed. Now called our Exotic Companion Animal Medicine and Surgery Service, we added new leadership with Dr. Nicole Wyre, who is dedicated to making the expertise

of these specialized vets available seven days a week to patients in need.

This issue also features how veterinarians play an urgently needed role in protecting and advancing the health of the dogs who work on behalf and by the side of their human partners. On page 4 we highlight Dr. Cindy Otto, associate professor, and her engagement with those working dogs who ensure international security, as well as the work of Dr. James Serpell, director, Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society, who is leading research that will help service dog organizations better prepare and choose dogs that will serve people in need.

As always, I am delighted to share the many projects that demonstrate that our students are VERY engaged in an array of incredibly innovative and exciting initiatives, which you can read about on page 16.

In addition to these exciting and impressive advances and adventures, this issue of *Bellwether* is also an issue of giving thanks.

We have included an Annual Report, showcasing some of our most steadfast supporters, which begins on page 25. I am amazed by the number of friends and especially by those who have supported Penn Vet for consecutive years. On behalf of everyone at the School, I sincerely thank you.

Further, we are on track to meet the goal of our current \$125 million campaign early and we have increased our endowment, a result of wise and disciplined focus on protecting our future while transforming our ability to operate efficiently in the present. Because we are always concerned about student debt, we minimized the impact on our students; we did not rely on increased tuition nor increased class size in order to achieve financial sustainability. We are focusing, as we conclude the campaign, on raising funds to reduce student debt load.

I am also happy to share that, with the conclusion of the reappointment and review process, I continue as Dean until 2018. My vision for the second half of my tenure is to position Penn Vet as the clear leader in the global One Health Initiative. We will lead in increasing awareness of the role of our profession to advance all species' and welfare, in a healthy environment. With all of the initiatives currently underway, and the many engaged in visionary plans for the future, we are on a trajectory to reach that goal.

—JOAN C. HENDRICKS, V'79, GR'80
THE GILBERT S. KAHN DEAN OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE