Building the future of veterinary medicine

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At UGA, we are passionate about educating the next generation of veterinarians. This passion powers our commitment to implementing innovative approaches to teaching as we seek to provide our students with the knowledge, skills, and judgment to thrive in their chosen profession.

3-D anatomy learning—With COVID-19 looming, anatomy professor Dr. Puliyur S. MohanKumar devised a creative way for students to maintain social distancing in his first-year anatomy laboratory course. Using 3-D digital reconstructions of clinical cases from CT or MRI images, students were able to dissect 3-D animals using Xbox controllers. While half of his class worked with embalmed animals in the lab, the other half worked on digital animals. The groups switched every other day, allowing students to experience both environments. This unique approach resulted in more engaged students who grasped complex concepts earlier than previously able.

Educational Resources Center (ERC)—While COVID further emphasized the need to use innovative teaching practices, it wasn’t the first time we used advanced technology to inspire student learning. Dr. Jim Moore collaborates with medical illustrators, a medical photographer, and an interactive media programmer in ERC to create educational aids that convert difficult-to-envision concepts into engaging illustrations, animations, and interactive 3-D models for faculty members. In doing so, ERC has created more than 60 free interactive eBooks covering a variety of topics that have been downloaded 140,000 times in 50 countries. ERC is also home to a unique postgraduate certificate program for medical illustrators, an effort that helps keep it a leader in supporting veterinary education.

Honeybee medicine—With the FDA’s decision to put a halt to individuals purchasing antimicrobials for their bee colonies, veterinarians were called into action. Dr. Joerg Mayer is ensuring that the next generation of UGA veterinarians will be capable of supporting bee colonies and the honey industry. As Dr. Mayer says, “The next time you go shopping or are having dinner, think that bees are directly responsible for the production of about 30% of all food we consume.” Mayer formed a Vet Bee Club for College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) students, who can take the UGA Master Beekeeper certification examination and attend meetings of local beekeepers’ associations. The addition of this bee medicine program to UGA CVM also cements the college’s residency program as the first and only in the country to offer such a wide spectrum of training, from invertebrate to megavertebrate care and creatures ranging from bees to whales.

Distinguished educators—The highest honor bestowed on educators at UGA is the Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professorship. Faculty in the CVM have been awarded this accolade a record 20 times, with Dr. Jo Smith, a small animal medicine internal medicine clinician, becoming the most recent faculty member to earn the distinction. Smith’s primary areas of focus are communication, cultural competency, and self-directed learning. We are so very fortunate to have faculty members who walk the walk when it comes to educating our veterinary students.

At UGA, passion powers our commitment to the education of our future leaders.