

## **Disseminating Authoritative Information Puts College on World Map**

By Herb Whiteley

No matter where you live or what aspects of veterinary medicine interest you, the University of Illinois is likely to have a continuing education opportunity that meets your needs. Through the college's Office of Public Engagement, the expertise of our faculty is made available in a multitude of ways, from one-hour lectures to certificate programs spanning two years and from in-person to online experiences.

"Building on our strong record of successful continuing education programs, we are introducing the Illinois Veterinary Academy of Lifelong Learning," says Dr. Allan Paul, associate dean for public engagement. "We envision Illinois as the premier source of authoritative information for veterinarians, animal producers, and the animal-owning public, whether they are in Illinois or on the other side of the world."

You may associate our public engagement office with the annual Fall Conference or the many outstanding stand-alone offerings, ranging from an intensive dentistry weekend with Dr. Sandy Manfra Marretta to periodic "Vet U" lectures and social hours across the state. In addition to these, two signature programs of the office have gained an international reputation for excellence.

More than 200 animal health professionals have honed their business and communication skills through the Executive Veterinary Program, offered initially for swine veterinarians and later for small animal practitioners. The EVP model—learning from instructors in Urbana for two days every other month and completing assignments and sharing online between sessions—is currently proving effective in two new areas: delivering hands-on advanced training in small animal ultrasound and bringing business management skills to leading pork producers. Many possibilities are under consideration for other subjects and audiences that would be well served through the EVP model.

Another program, Veterinary Education Online (VEO), caters to busy veterinary professionals who want anytime, anywhere access to interactive, university-level continuing education. To date, individuals from all 50 states and from 43 countries have learned from the college's board certified specialists through VEO. New VEO modules will debut later this year.

"Illinois represents authoritative, unbiased information that veterinary professionals trust," notes Mandy Barth, associate director for public engagement, who organizes dozens of programs reaching thousands of people each year. "Our office makes access to this valued information efficient, affordable, and effective."

The newest venue for conveying relevant professional information is the most customizable ever: the Visiting Practitioners Program. This program can be as short as one day or can span months and can involve one or more specialty areas of interest to the participant. Practitioners learn by

observing the daily activities of specialists in our teaching hospital or diagnostic laboratory—  
“time in the trenches,” as Barth puts it.

“We’ve already had a few veterinarians, including one from France, take advantage of this program, and we’re eager to open it up to practitioners closer to home as well,” says Barth.

To find out more about the Visiting Practitioners Program and other Illinois programs, call 217-333-2907 or see [vetmed.illinois.edu/ope/](http://vetmed.illinois.edu/ope/).

[Sidebar:]

### **Fall Conference 2012: Highlights**

Mark your calendars for September 13 and 14 for one of the most affordable and practice-relevant veterinary conferences in the Midwest!

- Dentistry wet lab, a full day with Drs. Sandy Manfra Marretta and Steve Juriga
- Dermatology wet lab, a half day with Dr. Domenico Santoro on superficial fungal infection in dogs and cats
- Oncology meets cytology, with Drs. Anne Barger and Laura Garrett
- Small animal cardiology, two days of lecture featuring imaging and more
- Golf outing, Illini football, reunions, alumni awards, and other opportunities to reconnect with your peers