

Veterinary Technician and Veterinary Assistant Program News

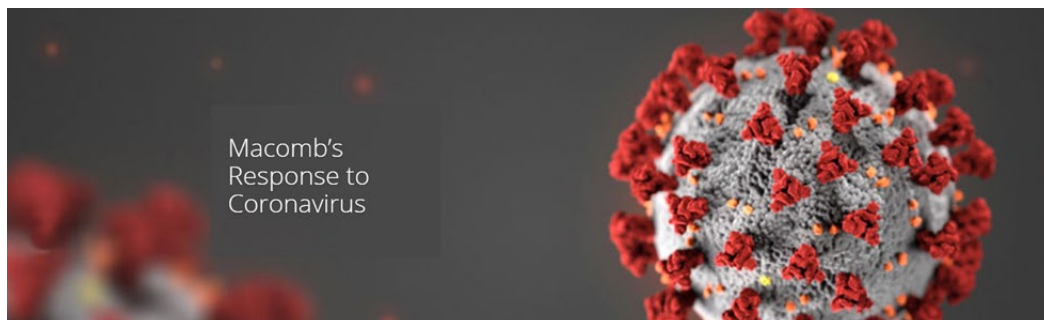


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Teaching and learning in an extraordinary year

2020 was a year for the books and brought about major changes. As it relates to Macomb's Veterinary Technician and Veterinary Assistant programs, this has affected the way students attend classes and how instructors teach them. It has also resulted in implementation of major safety-related protocols, as well as significant events now being held virtually.

For us, things really began to change on March 12, 2020. We had only been back from Spring Break for three days when an announcement was made that all on-campus, in-person classes were being "temporarily" suspended as part of a "two-week pause." Immediately, we started developing plans to ensure strong communication with our students. We also got to know Zoom in record time! Instructors brought home as much equipment and teaching supplies as possible to ensure a smooth transition to remote learning. In addition, we learned that all internships were to be suspended as well.



Virtual staff meeting on Zoom

The pause allowed faculty to move classes to Canvas (the college's online platform). Little did we know the true impact COVID-19 was going to have. The nation entered a state of emergency and, over the course of those first few weeks, the veterinary faculty and staff worked around the clock to make sure we were fully prepared to move our curriculum online. The goal was to get all of our students successfully through the remainder of the school year. During those initial weeks, we received daily updates from the college administrators. The number one focus then was the safety of all faculty, staff and students and this continues to be the focus to this day. We have

remained committed to supporting our students' educational process throughout the pandemic and continue to do so each and every day.

On March 17, President Sawyer announced the college would be closed to the public. Faculty and staff were instructed to begin the transition to working from home for the foreseeable future. Classes resumed online via Zoom. This was a very big adjustment, not only for our students, but also our faculty. As you all know, our programs are very hands-on, and we were committed to making sure students received the education they needed in order to complete the semester. We are very pleased to report that we did not have to issue any incomplete grades. Our first Veterinary Assistant class completed the program with a 100 percent pass rate on the NAVTA AVA Credentialing Exam. Our senior Veterinary Technician students graduated on time and also did extremely well on their licensing exam with a pass rate of 91 percent, which far exceeded the national average of 71 percent. In addition, our junior Veterinary Technician students successfully completed the requirements for their winter classes, allowing them to move on in the program.



Teaching and learning in an extraordinary year continued

It was not just classes that changed. No in-person aspect of our programs was left untouched. Creativity was key, last summer, when it came to planning the AVA informational workshops, student orientations, the new students welcome party and, of course, graduation for the Class of 2020. We stepped up to the challenge and were able to hold these major events virtually.

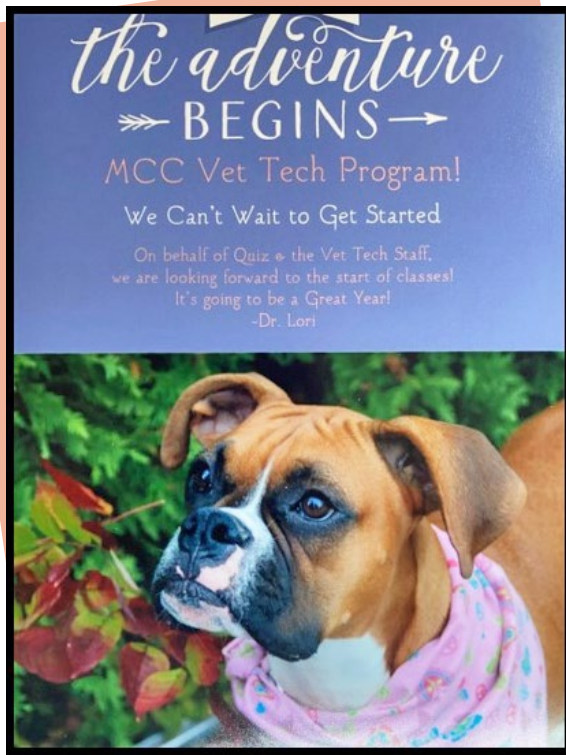
Then came the announcement that we would be starting the new school year virtually. This resulted in a major undertaking by the faculty. All fall courses had to be revamped for virtual delivery. Over the summer, junior students completed all non-clinical assignments for internship. Faculty and staff spent the summer setting up courses for fall 2020 in Canvas. This included 15 classes, all required notes and assignments and the upload of 47 exams. In addition, the first and second VA program modules were converted and uploaded.

During the first three weeks of fall semester, all classes were held virtually. Labs were scheduled as hybrids, meaning instruction took place both virtually and with scheduled on-ground classes for essential skill completion.

We have been doing many of the same things...just in new and innovative ways. We held a virtual graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020. We offered orientation for the new junior class virtually, mailed a welcome card and sent a welcome video to new juniors, and the senior students were able to uphold the tradition of hosting a welcome party. Even our staff has adapted...we now hold our staff meetings via Zoom!

So, we imagine you are all wondering what classes actually look like now. Lectures are very similar. Students attend classes at regular times. The lectures are taught virtually on Zoom which allows for live student interaction. Students also wear their scrubs and ID badges for all Zoom classes, just as they would when they are on campus.

Labs have taken on a new look and feel. We are simulating some tasks using other things to help students gain muscle memory. For example, in the surgery-assisting lab, students



Welcome card mailed to new juniors ahead of the new academic year



Faculty and staff working from home





Teaching camera in use



VA students taking the NAVTA credentialing exam on the last day of the semester. We are happy to report we had a 100% pass rate!

have employed their creative skills. They practice wrapping gown packs using shirts to represent the gown, include a small hand towel in their "pack," and then a sheet or large towel is used as the outer wrap. They practice hand scrubbing using a vegetable brush and kitchen soap. We also utilize many one-on-one assessments in our various labs via Zoom breakout rooms. These are also used for small group interactions and for private instructor/student feedback. These adjustments allow students to build excellent muscle memory on the steps needed to perform essential skills. In our clinical pathology labs, we use a high-tech camera on a teaching microscope, and a realistic WBC/RBC/Urinalysis simulator. Both



allow students to perform various tests such as WBC differential, evaluating urine sediment, viewing various RBC morphology changes and more. Once on campus, they make their own blood smears and use their own microscope. We also continue to house teaching animals when we are on campus.

The college has an effective online COVID screening process, so we feel comfortable coming on campus when needed. All faculty, staff and students wear KN95 masks. We have decreased our classroom sizes, established social distancing parameters in our classrooms, and have implemented enhanced cleaning protocols. This Winter 2021 Semester, we continue to hold many classes virtually. Our designation as an "essential program" allows us to go on campus for our hands-on, essential skills labs. Our students are progressing nicely through their respective programs, and we look forward to the day when we can resume in-person instruction full time.



Labs held on ground

Staff Updates

Welcome to our newest lab assistant

Sheryl Preston, LVT, has joined our team as a part-time lab assistant. Sheryl graduated from the Veterinary Technician program in 1999, and is already enjoying her new journey with us. She was able to come on campus in January to see the renovated and expanded teaching facility. She said she “almost didn’t recognize it” because so much had changed since she was a student. In addition to working on our team, Sheryl also works part-time with the Leader Dogs for the Blind.



NEW SPECIALTY AVAILABLE FOR VETERINARY TECHNICIAN EDUCATORS

There is a new specialty available for veterinary technician educators: the Academy of Veterinary Technician Specialists in Education (AVTSE).

The AVTSE values quality in education, professionalism, career development and leadership. Its mission is to provide resources that elevate the skills, knowledge and professionalism of veterinary technicians in the education profession by igniting and maintaining passion throughout their educational career.

The AVTSE is also committed to raising the standards of training and educational endeavors while supporting veterinary technicians in their goal of educational career advancement.

Dr. Lori Renda-Francis is currently the president-elect of the AVTSE and is pleased to report that as of January 2021, there are now eight veterinary technician educators who have received the AVTSE designation.





Take Your Kids to Work Day

Every year, the college offers activities for Take Your Kids to Work Day. Macomb staff are invited to bring their children to see where their parents work, and while on campus, they get to rotate through various departments for some firsthand experience. The Veterinary Technician program participates in these experiences by offering a variety of stations for the children with hands-on demonstrations. Some of the activities include learning how to perform CPR on animals, caring for kittens, looking at things under a microscope, listening to a dog's heartbeat, and bandaging a dog's leg. In addition, the children can decorate water bowls and collars to take home for their pets. It is an amazing day, seeing employees with their kids and enjoying the energy and enthusiasm they bring to the campus.

2019 event



Alumni



10th Annual Alumni Reception!

In October 2019, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Alumni Reception with over 140 of our past students and special guests! Since this was a milestone year, we decided to have a special theme, which was “Stress-Free People and Pets.” We all know that the veterinary profession can be stressful, and feel it is important that all technicians remember to not only take care of their patients, but also themselves. We wanted to provide a calm, therapeutic and educational evening. We played peaceful music, displayed water fountain centerpieces on the tables and restored tranquility with calming aromatherapy. That doesn’t mean we forgot to have fun! Attendees who came early toured our renovated and expanded teaching facility and enjoyed a celebratory mocktail with their former classmates and coworkers. Our RACE-approved continuing education extended the theme with excellent presentations from Dr. Julie Cappel, DVM, who talked about “Stress Management and Preventing Burnout” and Julie Legred, CVT, who spoke on “Fear Free — Taking the Pet out of Petrified.”



Thank You!

The Veterinary Technician program appreciates the generous support of our sponsors who help make this fantastic annual event possible. Sponsors included Mission Veterinary Partners (MVP), Royal Canin, Boehringer Ingelheim, Faithful Companion, Heska, Idexx, Oakland Veterinary Referral Services, Patterson Veterinary and Patrizi Microscope. Thank you for helping us make each year’s program bigger and better for our ever-increasing pool of Macomb graduates!



PATRIZI MICROSCOPE
Sales, Service and Repairs
Gary Patrizi

Graduation

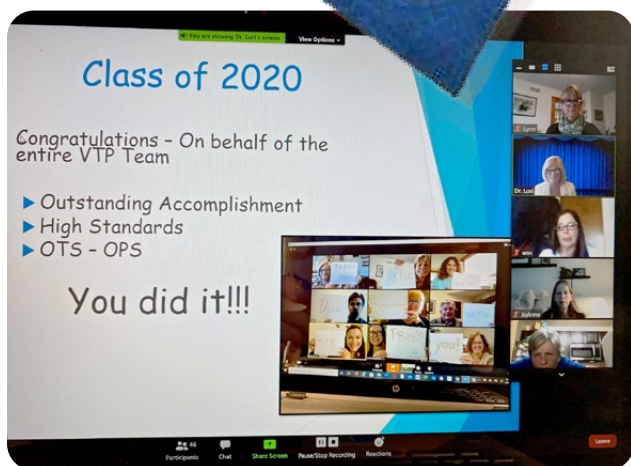


2020 was a milestone graduation year. In addition to congratulating the Veterinary Technician program Class of 2020, we are also proud to recognize Macomb's first Veterinary Assistant program students who are the Class of 2020!

Every year produces new and exciting learning opportunities for our students and 2020 was no exception. Both our Veterinary Technician and Veterinary Assistant student graduates had to adapt to the changes in their education brought about by COVID. Not only did they rise to the challenge, they greatly exceeded our expectations. We hope they are as proud of themselves as we are of them, and we want to welcome them as our newest colleagues to the veterinary profession.



Above: VA graduates pose on their final day of the program
Below: Commemorative badges given to the VA graduates



Left: The Veterinary Technician Class of 2020 virtual graduation

Internship



Senior student Kelsey Eagle

During the duration of their two-year program, Veterinary Technician students are required to complete two 200-hour internships. This gives them the opportunity to break away from the books and dive into real-life experiences working with client-owned animals. This is also a time when they can practice their people skills (general communication, working with difficult clients). Starting at orientation and continuing throughout the program, students work on developing their outstanding technical skills and outstanding people skills. Internships really allow them to put these skills to use. Every year, most of our students receive job offers through their internships, so it ends up being a win-win scenario, both for the veterinary clinics and the students.

Kitten Stress Buster at the Library

At the end of each semester, when students' nerves are most frayed, our technician students come to the rescue by bringing foster kittens to the campus library for some fun and stress relief. This is a great opportunity for students around the college to relax with some adorable fur babies and the added socialization also helps make the kittens more adoptable.

Smiles and laughter fill the room. You can practically see the tension wash away as the kittens snuggle, chase toys and sometimes even fall asleep. This is always an extremely popular activity for students and we often get a few staff visitors as well!



Spring 2019 Kitten Stress Buster



Walnut Grove Golden Retriever Puppy Reunion

Imagine a family reunion complete with potluck-style food, music, hayrides, a bounce house, games, prizes and, of course, your family. Now picture it with about 200 fluffy golden retrievers of all ages, accompanied by their families. That is Walnut Grove's Annual Puppy Reunion.

This golden retriever breeding facility is located on 11 acres of farmland nestled in the northeast corner of Macomb County.

During the 2019 event, Veterinary Technician program staff members, along with some of our senior students, demonstrated how to perform canine CPR. This was made possible with use of our program's CPR dog training mannequins. They provided great hands-on experience for the many dog owners who took part in this interactive tutorial. We were pleased to hear that the reunion was a success and attendees were greatly appreciative of their new canine CPR knowledge facilitated through our program.



2019 puppy reunion

Elementary School STEM Night

We were thrilled to hear from Macomb program alumna Sina Rhodes, LVT, president of Oakbrook Family Tree, who invited us to attend an elementary school STEM night at Oakbrook Elementary School in Sterling Heights. Lynn Roland, Veterinary Technician program lab supervisor, took some of our foster puppies, visited the school and taught students how to listen to puppy heart rates while promoting the Veterinary Technician and Veterinary Assistant programs. One family was even awarded a stethoscope donated by the college bookstore!



Winner of a stethoscope

Guest Surgeon Day

Assisting with surgery is a major responsibility of a veterinary technician. Each year, during the surgical techniques class, we prepare our junior technician students for Guest Surgeon Day. This involves immersing them in the surgical area of our teaching facility. Our guest surgeons, Dr. Jerrod Notebaert and Dr. Mark Hackel, volunteer their time to come in and spay and neuter our teaching animals. They provide an opportunity for students to learn how to work alongside a veterinary surgeon.

Students have specific responsibilities both prior to and following the surgeries. They are assigned to different groups and work together to accomplish the same goal: a successful start and end to the surgery and a smooth recovery.

Guest Surgeon Day gives students the opportunity to utilize their knowledge and training, and incidentally, the timing couldn't be better. This event happens just a few short weeks from when they begin their first internship!

Dr. Hackel is on the left (brown scrub top) and Dr. Notebaert is on the right



People, Pets and Vets



Roosters crowed, goats grazed on the lawn, and snakes slithered inside the building during the 16th annual People, Pets and Vets event held on October 26, 2019. Many more activities, animal-related fun, and educational programs also took place within E Building and the Veterinary Technician program teaching facility that day. Visitors viewed live, narrated spay and neuter surgeries performed on the teaching animals. Across the hall, children presented injured stuffed animals for suturing and bandaging. Live demonstrations of dog and cat CPR and neonatal care took place up and down the hallway. Students gave presentations on various animal-related topics in other areas. There was even a puppet show and face painting for the kids.

One of the best things about this event is that we get to partner with members of the Michigan Veterinary Medical Association to bring together pet industry experts, service groups, the local veterinary community and over 700 members of the public to offer a free, interactive and educational event!

We cannot wait until we are able to bring this very popular event back to campus!

Vet Tech and Vet Assistant Students Working Together

With our new Veterinary Assistant (VA) program up and running, Dr. Lori decided to try something new. Realizing how real-world practice functions, she wanted our technician students and our assistant students to work hand in hand. The opportunity first came about during module two of the VA program, near the end of the Fall 2019 Semester. VA program students joined the Veterinary Technician (VT) program students for an animal pickup day. Students working together as a team created an exciting atmosphere and gave them a taste of what it will be like when they put their skills to practice outside the classroom and lab. It was an important learning experience for both groups of students, with the VA students practicing their newly-learned skills and the VT students learning how to lead an expanded team, delegate duties, and help train new team members.

The VA students also played an important role in hospital care duties. With the junior VT class having a stressful, heavy class load in the winter semester, it was helpful for our VA students to step up and help with hospital care shifts. To learn how the process works, we broke them up into small groups in the morning and afternoon. With our lab assistants monitoring the shifts, VA students got a good feel for the importance of these two-hour shifts. Students worked together to clean cages, feed and exercise the teaching animals, mop floors, do the laundry, and all the other “fun” duties that come with working in a veterinary clinic setting. It was a great day of learning!



Shelter Helpers



In February 2019, two men from Sterling Heights, who were facing eviction from their home, rented a U-Haul and drove their 53 dogs to Macomb County Animal Control to ask for help. Overwhelmed by the sudden influx of so many dogs requiring grooming and health care, Animal Control turned to the community for assistance, and Macomb Veterinary Technician students answered the call!

Many local news organizations covered the story, interviewing students for their perspective. Jeff Randazzo, Chief of the Macomb County Animal Shelter, issued a letter thanking the Macomb community, and stated, "Now I'd like to acknowledge several very important groups that played a behind-the-scenes role in this situation. First, our team of vet tech students from [...] Macomb Community College. These individuals provided essential care for the dogs in the form of grooming and medical treatment when they first arrived at the shelter. For that, I am extremely grateful."

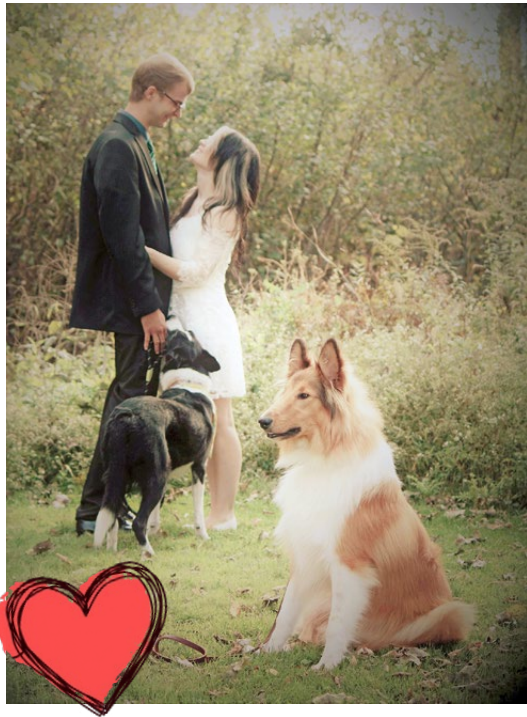


Campus Police Appreciation

The Campus Police always maintain a presence, protecting our students and staff. They open the building on weekends, giving access to the hospital care students who oversee our teaching animals, and protecting them at the end of each shift. Each fall, they give a presentation to our students to inform them of what to do in the event of a campus emergency. While it is part of their job, they always go above and beyond for our students and staff, and have helped many of us throughout the years. They are friendly, supportive, protective and professional, each and every day! Because of this, our students wanted to show their appreciation for all their hard work, and gifted them with a cheerful basket of goodies!



Macomb Vet Tech Couple Tied the Knot



(and they didn't use stretchy gauze!)

Macomb Veterinary Technician program alumni Nick Kowalski, LVT, Class of 2015 and Brandy (Hlas) Kowalski, LVT, Class of 2014, officially wed on October 21, 2018. The couple met while pursuing their shared professional interest in the veterinary field as Macomb Veterinary Technician program students. Nick recalls how their relationship first developed.

"We met at Macomb's People, Pets and Vets, Nov. 2, 2013 when I was a first-year student and she was a second-year. We officially started dating Dec. 1 of that year. We used to have a lot of coffee study dates at Biggy down the street on M-59."

Nick and Brandy must have actually studied during those "study dates," as the couple graduated from the program, received state LVT credentials, and continued their passion for helping animals as a career.

The duo is dedicated to the Veterinary Technician community and served together on the executive board of the MAVT (Michigan Association of Veterinary Technicians).

Congratulations, Nick and Brandy! We wish you many years full of happiness and helping animals!



Yoga

In an effort to recognize the importance of school-life balance, as well as reducing stress and anxiety, we offered yoga to our junior and senior students during final exam week 2019. We invited Dana Meke, a registered yoga instructor, to teach a few sessions for our students. Dana brought calming music, lighting and aura to create a room full of peace and tranquility. It was a great way for our technician students to destress, reestablish focus for their final exams, and finish the semester out strong. The second semester is considered the most challenging. Junior students are tasked with learning and applying real-life anesthesia scenarios, adjusting to the "not-so-black-and-white" critical thinking aspects, and long packets of pharmacology and clinical pathology notes. Not only is it a challenging semester for the junior class, but we also have to contend with an eager, ready-to-graduate senior class. At this point in the program, they have been studying around the clock for the past two years and, in addition to their classes on campus, they are undertaking their second internship. Needless to say, they also need some stress reduction!

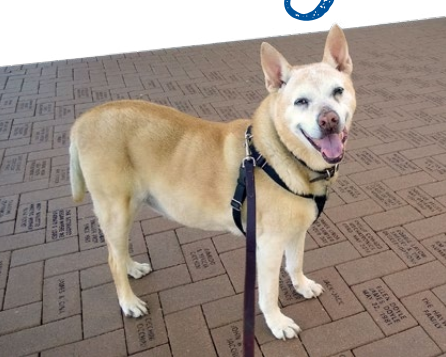
Our hope was that when our students leave the Veterinary Technician program, they would realize that implementing work-life balance, finding time for self-care, and managing stress needs to be something they focus on throughout their veterinary career. While the life of a licensed veterinary technician is extremely rewarding, it can be both emotionally and physically draining. This is why learning the importance of self-care, even as students, is also an important part of their education.

Seniors yoga session



Junior class session

Congratulations



Scholarship Winners! 2019–20 Academic Year

Senior student Sarah Daniels was fall semester's winner of the Jack-Jack Taylor Pay it Forward Veterinary Technician Scholarship. The scholarship was created by Macomb retiree Lois Taylor, in honor of her dog, Jack-Jack, who passed away in early 2019. His legacy lives on in the success of Macomb's veterinary technician students. The framed award is displayed within our hospital area as a point of student pride.

We are very proud of all our student scholarship recipients.

Kate Chivers

Humane Society of Macomb
Veterinary Technician Scholarship,
winter 2020

Jack-Jack Taylor Pay it Forward
Veterinary Technician Scholarship,
winter 2020

Mulben Memorial
Endowment Scholarship, winter 2020

Shannon Coppi

Melanie Lynn Carlson Memorial
Endowed Scholarship, winter 2020

Sarah Daniels

Jack-Jack Taylor Pay it Forward
Veterinary Technician Scholarship, fall 2019

Melanie Lynn Carlson Memorial
Endowed Scholarship, fall 2019

Mulben Memorial
Endowment Scholarship, fall 2019

Kelly Holguin

Humane Society of Macomb
Veterinary Technician Scholarship,
fall 2019

Macomb Community College
Veterinary Technician Scholarship,
winter 2020

Southeastern Michigan
Veterinary Medical
Association Scholarship, fall 2019

Alexis Kain

Southeastern Michigan
Veterinary Medical
Association Scholarship, fall 2019

Shelby Woodward

Humane Society of Macomb
Veterinary Technician
Scholarship, winter 2020

Mulben Memorial
Endowment Scholarship, fall 2019

Maddison Moore

Southeastern Michigan
Veterinary Medical Association
Scholarship, fall 2020

Humane Society of Macomb
Veterinary Technician
Scholarship, fall 2020

Nick Popp

Southeastern Michigan
Veterinary Medical Association
Scholarship, fall 2020

Miranda Hoskin

Southeastern Michigan
Veterinary Medical Association
Scholarship, fall 2020

Kelly Moilanen

Humane Society of Macomb
Veterinary Technician Scholarship,
fall 2020

Welcome our Newest Veterinary Technician and Veterinary Assistant Classes

Staff
attending
the welcome
party



The journey has officially begun for our newest group of students. Our Veterinary Technician students are the Class of 2022 and our Veterinary Assistant students are the Class of 2021. The first semester in these programs is always a very exciting time (and a little nerve-racking, as well) for new students and this past fall was no exception. In fact, because of COVID, their beginning has been rather atypical to say the least.

As has been a tradition for many years, the senior students hosted a welcome party for the new junior students. They had to employ creative methods to host the party virtually, but they pulled it off and everyone had a great time.

We are always excited for fall semester because it provides a fresh start! We hope students take time to savor the special moments of this experience, because graduation will be here before they know it!



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