



Dr. Stephen R. Briggs



“I firmly believe that I would not be where I am today if I had not attended Berry. I worked many jobs to gain practical experience, rode on the equestrian team and studied abroad. When I applied to vet school, I had done the rigorous coursework, learned the practical aspects of animal management, and had honed the necessary communication skills to be a well-rounded applicant. I think I appreciate my time at Berry even more after beginning vet school.”

– KATIE DORAN (14C)

The Ohio State University  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
(See page 19 for more)

# Best of breed

**B**ERRY'S ANIMAL SCIENCE PROGRAM IS ON A ROLL. From the May 2014 graduating class alone, 16 students are now enrolled in 10 different schools of veterinary medicine. And that is no fluke – 65 Berry graduates have been admitted to veterinary school since May 2010, an average of 16 per year. This is an enviable record both in terms of overall numbers and percentage of success.

Comparable residential colleges may have one or two students a year pursuing veterinary school admission, but Berry places a consistently large number at a consistently impressive rate. Our highly regarded program attracts students from across the country and likewise sends students to veterinary schools nationwide. Berry's animal science graduates have an acceptance rate approaching 90 percent, twice the national average. Those with a 3.5 GPA or better are almost certainly accepted into a top veterinary program, and students with a 3.2 to 3.5 GPA are often accepted as well.

By way of context, many observers believe

that admission to one of the nation's 30 veterinary schools is at least as competitive as medical school. Both have national acceptance rates of less than 45 percent. Students take the same pre-health core curriculum, including cellular biology, microbiology, organic chemistry, biochemistry, physics and calculus. Animal science majors also complete core courses in genetics, anatomy and physiology, nutrition, and reproduction.

Of course, not all animal science students are intent on veterinary school. Over the same four-year period, Berry animal science majors went on to pursue other graduate degrees at such universities as Cornell, Colorado State, Clemson and Oregon. Still others have pursued professional degrees in the human health sciences (M.D. and P.A.) and business (MBA). Dozens work as farm, dairy and equine managers or for organizations related to the food industry and food safety, including the U.S. and Georgia departments of agriculture.

This overall record of success has no

doubt fueled interest in the program and a recent surge of growth: The number of animal science majors has more than tripled over the last decade, making this signature Berry program our largest by a significant margin. This period of rapid growth also coincides with increased public demand for high quality and locally grown food and a national emphasis on math and science education.

## CHALLENGES CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

Growth of this magnitude necessitates adjustments and change, and these challenges are serving as the means for advancing the program to a whole new level. As we look to the decade ahead, we are focused on the reasons for the program's success and have committed ourselves to investing in ways that will build on its strong base.

Initially, the sudden increase in animal science majors enabled us to expand the number of faculty and course offerings. Six talented faculty members have been hired

# Meet

Sara



Micah



# &

Troy



**ANIMAL SCIENCE IS A DEMANDING COURSE** of study, yet Berry students rise to the challenge in distinctive ways.

A master of time management, Sara Vigue (14C) graduated at the top of her class and now is attending vet school at Auburn University. The native of Merritt Island, Fla., complemented her academic preparation with more than 700 hours of work at Berry's dairy and 600 hours in the Cage Center. A four-year starting outfielder on Berry's two-time SAA conference championship softball team, Sara also earned two all-conference awards and was selected as Berry's top 2014 scholar-athlete.

Micah Studdard (14C) of Armuchee, Ga., is known as a hard worker for a reason: He took full advantage of Berry's work program, putting in more than 4,000 hours. He devoted most of his time to beef cattle

operations and The Berry Farms Angus Beef student enterprise but also worked at the dairy and as a mechanic in the agriculture unit. Already, Micah is farm manager for Lyons Bridge Farm in Cave Spring, Ga., where he has established a herd of 40 cows, 15 of which were purchased from Berry. He also is responsible for hay production and sales.

Some call Alan "Troy" Mulder (14C) a "throw back" because of his good manners. He's also known for his hard work. And in the not-too-distant future, he'll be known as a vet. The Jacksonville, N.C., native is currently in veterinary school at Tuskegee University in Alabama. At Berry, Troy worked nearly 1,000 hours in the beef unit. He also put in 175 hours with animal science, including work on several research projects, and assisted the Sponsored Research Office with processing faculty grants.

ALAN STOREY

since 2008, bringing teaching and research strengths that complement the expertise of long-term faculty members George Gallagher, Judith Wilson and college veterinarian Martin Goldberg. This extended faculty opens a wealth of opportunities for program enhancement given the right facilities and curriculum.

The faculty has already worked to create two different and constructive concentrations within the animal science major. Approved last year, students now choose to focus on pre-veterinary/pre-professional studies or production/management. The tracks have a common set of core requirements in animal science, biology, chemistry and math but differ in terms of additional chemistry and physics classes versus courses in business and accounting.

Our next step is to provide top-notch teaching and laboratory spaces that take advantage of our exceptional campus and propel hands-on learning to a new level. The animal science program will relocate from the Westcott Building, its home for the last 28 years, into a new wing being planned for the McAllister Hall science building. This new wing, which will include office and research spaces that encourage the involvement of students, will be designed specifically for laboratory-based courses such as veterinary microbiology and reproductive physiology.

[As a related aside, this wing also will facilitate important cross-disciplinary relationships as Berry develops a distinctive emphasis on "one health." This emerging

area of scientific research seeks to control the spread of disease in both animals and humans and involves researchers in biology, biochemistry and animal science. Berry's expansive setting, with its mix of wildlife and domesticated livestock, provides a natural laboratory for understanding animals and for investigating the interconnectedness of health in an ecosystem.]

We know that Berry's pre-veterinary program is special in part because it provides students with exceptional firsthand experiences involving large animals. Students and faculty are attracted to Berry because of the ideal fit between program and place. Additional research and teaching facilities – configured for safe and sheltered interaction with dairy and beef cattle, sheep, horses, and other animals – are planned for locations near the dairy and equine centers (see page 19). These laboratories will provide unprecedented opportunities for firsthand learning and participation in research. In the sciences, hands-on participation in research opens doors for students, and many faculty members pick projects specifically to create opportunities for student involvement.

The growth of the animal science major also has created challenges and opportunities for Berry's work program. The number of students working at Berry overall has increased by 50 percent (from approximately 1,200 to more than 1,900) since 2005, and the number of students interested in positions related to animal science has increased even more so. Currently, more than 140 students typically work each

semester in our animal care, management and research areas. In addition, the college has promoted "The Berry Farms" as an entity reflecting the college's history and our emphasis on local sustainability. "The Berry Farms" encompasses a variety of enterprises operated and managed with student leadership, including several with a direct animal science connection: Angus Beef, Jersey Milk, Genetics and AgriEducation. In the years ahead, it may be possible to expand this collection of enterprises on campus while also encouraging collaborations with off-campus partners and local businesses.

Finally, Berry's long history of success in animal science coupled with surging interest suggests an opportunity to form a rich web of connections. We envision a network that connects seasoned alumni with those who are newly minted or with students whose interests are still emerging. Such a network would allow current students to seek advice from professionals with established practices or recent graduates in the middle of their graduate studies. It would also provide a way for animal science alumni to reach out to others in geographic proximity or with similar professional interests.

In the years ahead, we hope to facilitate connections of this sort so that graduates of Berry's animal science program can celebrate their collective successes and can inspire and assist those who are now following in their footsteps. It will be one more means by which Berry breeds success. **B**