A Message From the President

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Spring and welcome to the ACT’s newsletter.

I am delighted to start this newsletter by reporting that the AVMA and the American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS) have reinstated the ACT to full recognition status as of late November 2023. The ACT was under probationary recognition status since June 2022. To comply with ABVS requirements, changes to training program requirements, trainee supervisor responsibilities and mandatory reporting were introduced to the General Information Guide (GIG). Implementation of these changes is an ongoing process and I hope I can count on your support as we go through the inevitable challenges involved with the introduction of new procedures.

The full Treasurer’s report is included below, but here are some highlights. The College is solvent and liquid, but over the past few years the ACT Executive Board (EB) has operated with a very tight budget. Annual net operating income has been positive, but just barely; in 2023 the net income was US $1,405. Most of our funds are used to cover administrative expenses (52% of the annual budget) and expenses associated with the certifying examination (23% of the annual budget). The EB streamlined its work and reduced its expenses to approximately 4% of the annual budget. If you haven’t done so yet, please renew your membership as soon as possible. Membership support is essential to fund the College’s activities.

An outstanding Theriogenology Conference is planned for this year. The highlight of the program is a full-day Bovine Symposium, followed by plenary and species track sessions. There are great activities for Diplomates, general practitioners, ACT trainees, veterinary students, and technicians. Register with a discount before May 15. I also hope that you can join us during the conference to congratulate Dr. Regina Turner, recipient of the 2024 Theriogenologist of the Year Award! The ACT EB reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the annual conference and will continue to plan and organize the plenary session and to sponsor the plenary speakers. Going forward, the ACT President-Elect will also serve as a standing member of the organizing committee and will chair the ‘Applied Research Track’ of the conference. In addition, the ACT will sponsor new cash prizes for case and poster presentations.

The various ACT Committees have been diligently conducting the College’s business. Full reports from the chairs are included below, but here are some highlights. The Exam Committee did an outstanding job transitioning to an entirely new exam blueprint following the results from last
year’s job task analysis and I am immensely thankful for their efforts! The Angoff Scoring Committee has now started reviewing the questions selected for the exam. The Training and Credentialing Committee completed their annual evaluation of application packages and is now focusing on considering improvements to the GIG. The Scientific Information Committee expects a robust number of submissions for the annual conference following the approval of ACT support for additional cash prizes. The Exam Process Committee is drafting a proposal for the possible adoption of a two-step certification. Finally, I would like to remind all who achieved Diplomate status in 2016 or later that the platform to submit your Maintenance of Certification documentation is now available.

Two positions on the ACT Executive Board will become vacant in July 2024: Vice-President and Director. The nominations for these positions are included in this newsletter. An electronic ballot will be distributed by email in April. Newly elected officers will be announced in May and will take office at the annual business meeting in July. The VP serves four years on the board, including one year as President. In addition to serving on the board, at different times throughout their tenure, the VP also chairs the Theriogenologist of the Year Award nomination committee and the EB nomination committee. The VP also serves for one year as a member of the Training and Credentialing Committee and helps organize the annual Theriogenology Conference. The Director serves three years on the board.

I would like to give a huge ‘thank you’ to all colleagues who volunteer their time on the Executive Board, Committees, and as AVMA Representatives – your dedication to the College is very much appreciated. Finally, I would like to encourage all to review and respond to the call for volunteers included in this newsletter.

See you all in Oklahoma City.

Leo Brito
ACT President 2023 – 2024

**ACT Committee Reports**

**AVMA Representative Report**

I attended the in-person VSOC meeting in March for the second quarter of 2024. The minutes of the meeting are in process and will be shared with the ACT board once received. A few items of note that were discussed include: reviews and creations of new policies regarding internships (currently under review) including a new one on large animal ambulatory internships, the AVMA principles of veterinary medical ethics including what defines a specialist and what the AVMA or specialty groups can do or not do to protect that concept, updates on fellowships within specialist groups, the use of artificial intelligence in veterinary medicine, a new subcommittee on the veterinary specialist shortages in academia, and finally the progress on the independent oversight of residency training programs project. VSOC has recommended that a group be created including specialty, non-specialty, and various other collaborators to investigate whether a separate residency regulation program is recommended, similar to what is done in human medicine, as well as the costs associated with such a program and more information will be forthcoming. I am currently involved in the subcommittees on veterinary specialist shortage in academia and policy review regarding internships. I am happy to answer any questions and/or carry information back to the AVMA VSOC on behalf of the ACT.

Submitted by: Dr. Sarah Eaton, VSOC Representative
Exam Committee

The Certifying Committee met in person in the Allam House at the New Bolton Center of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine in January to prepare the 2024 ACT certifying examination. The 2024 exam will be held on July 16 – 17, 2024. The executive board provided funding for the certifying examination committee members to attend the National Board of Medical Examiners item writing training, many of the committee members participated.

Submitted by Dr. Soon Hon Cheong, Chair, Exam Committee

Angoff Scoring Committee

The Committee has started scoring the questions for the 2024 exam. Members of the committee have been taking the question writing course offered by National Board of Medical Examiners. We have prepared a new committee SOP.

Submitted by Drs. Cheryl Lopate and Robyn Ellerbrock

Training & Credentialing Committee

The Training & Credentialing Committee (TCC) reviewed and recommended to the Executive Board six applicants be approved for alternate route training. Additionally, TCC received two applications from two universities to establish new residency programs: University College Dublin and University of Glasgow. The TCC recommended both for approval to the Executive Board. Finally, the TCC reviewed 16 credentialing packets submitted for application to sit for the 2024 ACT Credentialing Examination.

Submitted by Dr. Juan Samper, Chair, Training & Credentialing Committee

Scientific Information Committee

In autumn of 2023, the Committee embarked on revisions to our Standard Operating Procedures (formerly known as Appendix C) aimed at enhancing clarity and ensuring greater consistency. Updates were made to committee member service terms and responsibilities, with language incorporated to offer flexibility for newly appointed members to contribute to committee activities prior to commencing their first-year term. Internal communication processes were streamlined and standardized for greater efficiency during abstract evaluation. Furthermore, the Committee advocated for the introduction of a 'Competitive Poster' session at the annual Therio Conference, where the top eight scoring poster abstracts will vie for two cash awards. Both the 'Competitive Poster' and 'Competitive Case Report' awards will be financially supported by ACT. The 2024 Call for Abstracts yielded over 60 submissions for this year's presentations. The blinded review process is currently underway.

The Committee welcomes newly nominated ad hoc member, Katelyn Waters, DVM, MS, DACT and full member, Jose A. Len, DVM, MS, PhD, whose terms begin in August 2024.

Submitted by Dr. Roberto Palomares, Chair, Scientific Information Committee

Exam Process Committee

The Committee reviewed the current General Information Guide (GIG) making suggested revisions to: reflect the change from one to two exams, make it clearer, correct typos, remove redundancies, encourage more candidates to attempt to become Diplomates (without lowering standards), and facilitate the work of the Exam and Credentialing Committees. The Committee is suggesting: each
exam is offered once a year, but no indication of when or where, the Qualifying Exam is on more basic material and is exclusively Multiple Choice, the Certifying Exam is on more applied material and is a combination of Multiple Choice, Short Answer/Essay and Practical questions, each candidate must have certain minimum credentials to write the Qualifying Exam, passing the Qualifying Exam is a pre-requisite for writing the Certifying Exam and a candidate must pass both exams and meet ALL credentialling requirements to become a Diplomate (no change in credentials needed, just a reduction in credentials needed to write the Qualifying Exam). Candidates are entitled to two weeks vacation for every 52 weeks. We will have one or two more sessions to further revise the GIG. The first draft of the proposal will be presented to the Executive Board in July.

Submitted by Dr. John Kastelic, Chair, Exam Process Committee

Treasurer’s Report

A balanced budget was presented to the Executive Board for review at the Winter Meeting and was approved. Total expenses are anticipated to be approximately $175,000. ACT continues to have reserves invested and those total approximately $312,000.

Submitted by ACT Treasurer Dr. Chance Armstrong

Call for Volunteers: Exam and Angoff Scoring Committees

The Exam Committee (EC) is seeking interested volunteers, specifically individuals with companion animal and ruminant expertise and with private practice or industry experience. The EC is responsible for preparing and grading the certifying exam. Volunteers serve a 6-years term, including one year as the vice-chair in charge of the practical exam, and one year as the chair in charge of the written exam. Committee members work independently throughout the year creating and editing questions and all members meet in person twice annually, first in January for exam preparation and again at the time of the Theriogenology Conference to grade the exam. Travel expenses are paid for by the College.

The Angoff Scoring Committee (ASC) is seeking interested volunteers, specifically individuals with companion animal and equine expertise. The ASC is responsible for scoring the questions included in the certifying exam and determining the cut-off score for passing the exam. Volunteers serve a 6-years term, including one year as the co-chair. Committee members work independently between March-June scoring questions and meet remotely to review scores.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact the ACT office at info@theriogenology.org.

Congratulations 2024 Theriogenologist of the Year

Each year the American College of Theriogenologists recognizes one of its members for their achievements and dedication to advancing the field of theriogenology. The ACT is proud to recognize the recipient of the 2024 Theriogenologist of the Year Award:

Regina M. Turner, VMD, PhD, Dipl. ACT

Dr. Turner graduated from the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Veterinary Medicine in 1989. She completed a residency program in Large Animal Reproduction at New Bolton Center and became Board Certified in Theriogenology in 1994. Between 1995 and 1999, Dr. Turner completed a PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Medicine. She was then hired as a faculty member in the Section of Large Animal Reproduction and Behavior in Penn’s Veterinary School where she currently serves as a Professor of Large Animal Reproduction.
Dr. Turner’s clinical and research interests focus on age-related stallion infertility and the molecular and cellular regulation of sperm motility. Most recently, her work has highlighted several processes that contribute to the detrimental effects of aging on testicular function, and collaborated on the development of an in vitro system to study capacitation and the physiologic significance of protein tyrosine phosphorylation in equine sperm.

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**2024 Certifying Exam**

**2024 ACT Exam Registration Deadline**

The deadline to register for the 2024 ACT Certifying Exam is Monday, April 15. The exam will take place Tuesday, July 16 through Wednesday, July 17, 2024. Please visit the ACT website for more information and to remit the exam fee (Exam or Re-Exam as appropriate; both $750) by April 15. Those registered to take the 2024 exam will receive additional instructions prior to the exam dates. Should you have any questions, please contact the ACT Office at info@theriogenology.org.

**Networking Activities for ACT at 2024 Therio Conference**

To improve the integration of new specialists into the College, the ACT EB has planned multiple activities with trainees and Diplomates during the annual conference. We hope that all advisors will encourage their trainees to participate in these events. Candidates sitting the exam will be treated to dinner with the Exam Committee on Thursday, July 25. A meet-and-greet function open to all trainees will be held early morning on Saturday, July 27. In addition, Diplomates may donate a ticket to the Therio Foundation event on Friday, July 26 to be raffled to ACT trainees.

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**Executive Board Election – Nominees for Officers and Directors of the College**

Elections are now being conducted for two positions on the ACT Executive Board: Vice-President and Director. Newly elected officers will be announced in May and will take office at the annual business meeting in July. Please review the nominations below and cast your vote by June 15.

**Nominees for Vice-President (One Position)**

**Carlos Pinto** is currently the Department Chair of Ambulatory Medicine and Theriogenology and the Dorrance H. Hamilton Professor in Applied Reproductive Medicine, at Tufts University. He obtained his DVM in 1986 from the Universidade Estadual Paulista, São Paulo,
Brazil, and worked as a solo, mixed animal practitioner for nearly 10 years. Dr. Pinto completed a residency in theriogenology at Louisiana State University and became a Diplomate in the American College of Theriogenologists in 1997. He received a PhD in Reproductive Physiology from North Carolina State University in 2001. Dr. Pinto served on the faculty at North Carolina State University (2002-2008), The Ohio State University (2008-2013), and Louisiana State University (2013-2023). Convinced that both the ACT and SFT are uniquely positioned to further their missions and strengthen membership, Dr. Pinto would value the opportunity to continue serving the veterinary profession by working with the Board of Directors for the American College of Theriogenologists. Dr. Pinto has a special interest in strategizing a joint ACT/SFT effort where development of a structured foundation and support system could be implemented for veterinary student club chapters. Such focused, intentional collaboration would facilitate improved and early recruitment of veterinarians dedicated to reproductive medicine and, in the case of being representatives for the ACT, enhance our ability to actively inspire veterinarians in the pursuit of Theriogenology as a veterinary specialty. For the benefit of the SFT and ACT veterinary community members, Dr. Pinto would also aim to explore the creation of educational programs offered in addition to those already provided by way of the annual Thero Conference. Addressing the needs and interests of veterinary students and professionals alike would boost professional engagement and appreciation for Theriogenology.

Juan Samper finished veterinary school at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in 1982. He then worked in private dairy and equine practice for a couple of years in his home country and subsequently earned a Master’s of Science and PhD from the University of Minnesota in 1990, that focused on reproductive physiology and clinical reproduction. Through residency training at Minnesota he became board-certified in the American College of Theriogenologists in 1991. Dr. Samper has served as an ACT board member and SFT board member and past-president and several other leadership positions in organized veterinary medicine. During his professional career Dr. Samper has had the opportunity to work on almost every facet of the profession including academia, private practice and industry. However, a constant passion has been veterinary education. He has trained many externs, interns and ACT diplomates both through traditional residency training as well as private practice route. He has held faculty positions at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Kansas State University, and clinical and administrative positions at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine and the University of Florida. In 1994, Juan started his own equine practice as a solo practitioner, which he later grew into a multi-vet practice, that was sold after 25 years. Dr. Samper currently serves as a clinical professor at Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and ST Genetics developing protocols to implement sex-sorted semen in equine. Dr. Samper’s extensive background over different facets of veterinary medicine and theriogenology will serve the College well in helping bridge the training of theriogenology of students and private practices, as more and more schools adopt the distributive model for fourth year veterinary students. Dr. Samper has published papers in different topics of equine reproduction and is the author of 2 editions Equine Breeding Management and Artificial Insemination and co-author of Current Therapy in Equine Reproduction. He is a frequent consultant to breeding programs and speaker at national and international meetings.

Jack Smith has been a member of the ACT for 20 years and has served in several capacities. He was previously a member of the ACT exam committee for six years and later
served as the ACT Secretary for three years. His previous experiences in leadership roles in both the ACT and SFT have allowed him to appreciate the unique challenges and opportunities of both organizations. Jack is currently serving in an administrative role at a college of veterinary medicine and is acutely aware of the growing need to continue to train and produce theriogenologists that will serve to meet the needs of future patients and their owners but to also, even more critically, provide the theriogenology training and veterinary education to our future veterinary students. Dr. Smith is committed to working diligently with fellow leaders in the ACT to identify and implement strategies needed to ensure the sustainability of the specialty for the next 25 years and beyond.

**Director (One Position)**

**Kristina Lu** is a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and an alumna of the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School, graduating in 2001. With a specialization in large animal theriogenology, she completed her residency at New Bolton Center in 2004. Currently, Kristina is at Hagyard Equine Medical Institute in Lexington, Kentucky, a prominent ambulatory and referral practice. Her focus lies in breeding management of sub-fertile mares, fertility of stallions, and pregnancy monitoring and maintenance. Kristina has actively served on Boards of Directors for various organizations including equine assisted human care and equine scientific and medical research. Grateful for the opportunities afforded by the American College of Theriogenologists, Kristina is now eager to give back and contribute to the growth of this esteemed organization. If elected, Kristina envisions a future that furthers collaboration between academia and private practices, specifically aiming to enhance continuing education programs for emerging veterinarians and scientists. Her goal is to disseminate knowledge, share the ACT’s enthusiasm for the specialty, and elevate the profile of Theriogenology.

**Jenny Sones** studies function, control, and signaling at the maternal-fetal interface during pregnancy using the horse and mouse as model species, with the ultimate goal of developing interventions that ensure pregnancy success and survival of both dam and offspring. She has had many experiences thus far during her career, all of which make her an excellent candidate for ACT Director. She has mentored a total of 11 ACT candidates, including eight traditional route and three alternative route candidates. Between her residency experience and early to midcareer faculty years, Dr. Sones has experience with residencies at three different institutions, giving her a unique perspective on the differences in training programs. Additionally, she has experience in both equine and small animal species and has also served as a program co-chair for the SFT meeting helping to organize the small animal symposium. With her extensive experience mentoring graduate students, residency trainees, and veterinary students, Dr. Sones has a vision and passion for the future of our profession and our specialty and would be a unique addition to the ACT Board of Directors.
Salman Waqas completed his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 2010 with summa cum laude and Master of Veterinary Science in 2013 from Pakistan before earning a PhD in 2018 from Washington State University (WSU) through a Fulbright Scholarship. During his PhD at WSU, he completed his alternate route training with Dr. Tibary. He then completed an internship at Auburn University in 2019 and later joined as a resident at WSU comparative theriogenology section. He also spent time at the Selçuk University Turkey and the University of Montreal Canada for specialty reproduction externships. He served as a comparative theriogenology faculty member in Pakistan for seven years, handling teaching, research, comparative theriogenology clinics, and ambulatory responsibilities, alongside advising MS and PhD students. His clinical interests include all aspects of veterinary reproduction, with a special interest in assisted reproductive technology and andrology. His research experience includes livestock genome editing, IVF, testicular vitrification, advanced sperm quality analysis techniques, spermatogonial stem cell isolation and transplantation besides other ARTs, theriogenology and molecular biology skills. He is currently a faculty in comparative theriogenology at WSU. His long-term goal is to serve and advocate theriogenology nationally and internationally and work for ACT and SFT. He also intends to develop and enhance the quality of theriogenology clinics and general veterinary curricula in developing countries. His research profile and comparative theriogenology experience capacitate him to serve the college well in this position.

Online voting closes June 15.

RENEW YOUR ACT MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

WWW.THERIOGENOLOGY.ORG
How To Renew Your

ACT Membership

☑ Sign in to the ACT Website

☑ If you don't remember your password, you may use the automated password reset request

☑ Click on Renew Your Membership Now

☑ You will be prompted to update the information in your member profile

☑ If you have any difficulty signing in or with the renewal process, please contact us at info@theriogenology.org or (334) 395-4666.

Thank you for your continued support and membership in the American College of Theriogenology!

2024 Therio Conference

July 25-27, 2024

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

Therio Conference
Early Bird Pricing
AVAILABLE UNTIL 5/15/24

ACT is Pleased to Sponsor the 2024 Therio Conference Plenary Speakers

Friday, July 26 | 8:00 am.

Alison Van Eenennaam, MS, PhD
*Ruminating on the Sustainability of Ruminants*

Alison Van Eenennaam is a Distinguished Professor of Cooperative Extension in the field of Animal Genomics and Biotechnology in the Department of Animal Science at the University of California, Davis. She received a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from the University of Melbourne in Australia, and both an MS in Animal Science, and a PhD in Genetics from UC Davis.

Elizabeth Strand, PhD, LCSW
*Real Resiliency*

Elizabeth B. Strand founded the Center for Veterinary Social Work (CVSW) at the University of Tennessee Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Social Work. The Center is dedicated to attending to the welfare of all species through excellence in global interprofessional practice. Her professional mission is to: 1) support the humane treatment of people and animals, 2) attend to mindfulness in all settings and situations, and 3) make every step as one that is directed toward building individual and collective peace.
Enjoy A Night Out with the Foundation on Friday, July 26 from 6 pm - 9 pm at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. The Foundation's Sundown Soiree will feature live and silent auctions, raffles, delicious food, drinks...and more!

Tickets to the event include the opportunity to visit the Museum - America's premier institution of Western history, art, and culture – before the party, between 5 pm - 6 pm. Transportation from the Sheraton Oklahoma City Downtown Hotel will be provided.

Diplomates may donate a ticket to be raffled to support Student/Resident/Trainee tickets.

The Soiree promises to be a memorable evening!