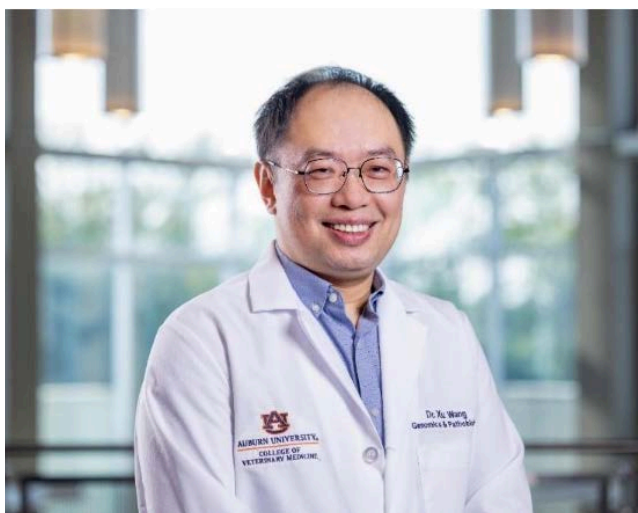


The Aubieclave Report



AUBURN UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE



THE DISCOVERY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Xu Wang

Dr. Xu Wang is a Professor of Comparative Genomics in Animal Health and Diseases at Auburn University, where he joined in 2017 as part of the Omics & Informatics cluster hire. Originally from Jinan, China—the birthplace of Confucius—he earned his undergraduate degree from Fudan University before moving to the U.S. in 2005 to pursue his Ph.D. and postdoctoral training at Cornell University.

Dr. Wang values Auburn's highly collaborative environment, where clinicians, pathologists, and scientists work together to translate research into advances in disease mechanisms and diagnostics. His lab focuses on projects with strong translational potential, aiming to develop practical applications in veterinary medicine, One Health, agriculture, food security, and national security. While the team primarily studies genomes and microbiomes of companion animals, their research also spans farm animals, humans, and beneficial insects, with a strong emphasis on livestock and aquaculture to ensure a safe, high-quality food supply. They are equally committed to animal welfare and improving the health and performance of working dogs, recognizing their critical role in national security.

Outside of research, Dr. Wang enjoys film photography and shoots with a Contax 645 medium-format camera.

THE DISCOVERY SPOTLIGHT

Taylor Gohagan

Meet Taylor Gohagan, our Clinical Pathology Lab Assistant, who joined Auburn just eight months ago. Originally from Opp, Alabama, Taylor says the best part of her job is being surrounded by people who truly love what they do—it makes every day rewarding.

When asked what she wishes more people knew about her role, Taylor explains:

“There’s so much hard work that happens behind the scenes in the Clinical Pathology Lab. Our team works tirelessly to keep everything running smoothly and to deliver accurate, reliable results for patient care. It really is a team effort—teamwork makes the dream work!”

And here’s a fun fact: Taylor studied Public and One Health as a minor in college, giving her a unique perspective on the importance of health systems and collaboration.



THE DISCOVERY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Erica Juszczuk

Dr. Erica Juszczuk is an Anatomic Pathology Resident II who joined Auburn about a year and a half ago. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, she enjoys the constant puzzle-solving and variety that pathology offers. No two cases are ever the same, and she values working with a team that truly

enjoys thinking through complex cases together.

Erica believes pathology is widely under-recognized despite being the source of many of the real answers that guide clinical decisions across nearly every specialty. Outside of work, she proudly embraces being a “crazy plant lady” and is the mother of two dog daughters, Wanda and Patricia, who keep life lively beyond the lab.

Welcome to The Jungle!



Lori Hojnacki

OUR NEW LEAD MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST

Lori Hojnacki joins the Auburn Veterinary College as the new Lead Medical Technologist working with Dr. Maria Naskou, bringing with her an impressive blend of military service, laboratory expertise, and leadership experience. Originally from New York, Lori earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from SUNY Albany before being commissioned as a Surface Warfare Officer in the U.S. Navy. From 1993 to 1999, she served aboard two combat ships—one in Guam and one in Norfolk—as one of the first women assigned to such vessels. Her Navy years shaped her strengths in project management, decision-making, and leadership. Before transitioning out of the service, she completed a Master of Science in Education from Old Dominion University.

Lori went on to build a strong career in the medical laboratory field, earning her associate's degree, becoming ASCP-certified in 2004, and achieving her Medical Laboratory Scientist certification in 2008. She has worked in a level 1 trauma hospital, a children's hospital outpatient lab, and later in federal service at a naval hospital, where she held multiple lead technologist roles in chemistry, night operations, and reference and genetic testing. Lori moved to Alabama to be closer to her daughter Jocelyn—an Auburn graduate now teaching in Lee County and expecting her first child—and is excited to continue her Auburn connection as part of the Veterinary College. War Eagle!

Welcome to The Jungle!



Caroline Parrish

OUR NEW RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Hello! I am thrilled to be working here, especially as a former Auburn student! I graduated from Auburn in May of 2025 with my B.S. in Genetics. I then started working for Dr. Xu Wang in January.

I enjoy reading and traveling! My fun fact is that I minored in Medieval and Renaissance/Early Modern Studies!

Jin-Ha Song

OUR NEW POST DOC

Hello! I earned my Ph.D. in Veterinary Pathobiology and Preventive Medicine in South Korea and recently joined Auburn University as a postdoctoral researcher. I'm very excited and grateful to be joining the Department of Pathobiology and to work with Dr. Miria Criado and the team here at Auburn.

Outside of work, I enjoy watching soccer and going for runs in my free time.



Welcome to The Jungle!



Aiden Wood

OUR NEW CENTRAL RECEIVING TECHNICIAN

Hi, my name is Aiden. A lot of you already know or recognize me, as I have been in this role for about a year and am transitioning from TES to full-time. I graduated from Auburn in 2022 with a bachelor's in chemistry, so I'm happy to be back as a staff member!

In my free time, I love to read, crochet, and knit. I also go line dancing a few times a week in Wetumpka!

Help us make dreams a reality!

Your impact begins here – choose the Auburn causes that are important to you. Whether you give to empower students through scholarships, drive groundbreaking research and life-changing outreach, or enrich the Auburn Experience, you are shaping our future.



<https://aub.ie/PathoGift>





PAOH student converts curiosity into impact

While the CVM's Public and One Health undergraduate program has been in existence for just over a year, the major attracts a very specific type of students.

"They're systems thinkers, they're curious, they're driven, and they're drawn to complex problems," said Dr. Kelley Steury, co-director of the PAOH program and assistant clinical professor in the Department of Pathobiology.

Chris Khalaf, a senior PAOH major from Vestavia Hills, AL, serves as a prime example of what the fast-growing program seeks to develop. His early curiosity about rural health care and food insecurity helped him define his goal of pursuing a law degree and applying his talents at the intersection of public health, food access, and public policy.

[Learn more about Khalaf's efforts to address food insecurity!](#)



New Patho Baby!

We are delighted to share that Dr. Barger's PhD student, Allison Wise Addison, and her husband, Drew, welcomed their first baby, Jean-Paul Addison, on December 16. Jean-Paul made his debut at 7:19 p.m., weighing 8 lbs 7 oz and measuring an impressive 23 inches long—already showing a notably robust early phenotype, with strong maternal influence observed (particularly with respect to height) and an exceptional level of cuteness.

As with everything she does, Allison appears to be a natural at motherhood. While her research focuses on catfish health, growth, and performance, she is clearly applying those same principles to her most important and rewarding project yet. Congratulations to the Addison family on this wonderful new addition!



Patho Student receives grant from the Gerondelis Foundation

Congratulations to PhD candidate Nikolia Darzenta from the Department of Pathobiology on receiving a prestigious Graduate School grant from the Gerondelis Foundation (Boston, MA) this past November!

Working under the mentorship of Dr. Maria Naskou, Nikolia is conducting exciting, innovative research focused on developing stem cell-derived therapies for neurodegenerative diseases.

We are thrilled to celebrate this well-deserved achievement and can't wait to see the impact of Nikolia's work in the years to come!



AU Patho Represented at 2026 CRWAD Conference

Theresa Quintana (PhD student) and her PhD mentor, Dr. Jeba Jesudoss Chelladurai, presented parasitology research at the 2026 Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases (CRWAD) in Chicago, IL, earlier this week.

Theresa presented an oral talk on canine *Cystoisospora* infection-associated microbiome changes and a poster on canine hookworms in Alabama. Dr. Jeba presented an oral talk on the resistant flea tapeworm.

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<https://aub.ie/PathoGift>





PUBLICATIONS

Gaonkar PP, Santana-Pereira ALR, Golden R, **Lambert A**, Higgins C, Adhikari Y, Bailey M, **Macklin K, Huber L**. Microbiome and resistome dynamics in different stages of commercial broiler production with restricted antimicrobial use. *BMC Microbiol.* 2026 Jan 8. doi: 10.1186/s12866-025-04664-3. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41507780.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41507780>

Henker LC, Cheng AC, Stockler JW, Thompkins K, Rush J, Williams C, Taylor V, Kirkland A, Quance C, Hicks J, Stuart K, L T **Neto R**. *Streptococcus lutetiensis* septicemia in a 3-month-old reticulated giraffe calf. *J Vet Diagn Invest.* 2026 Jan 21:10406387251412381. doi: 10.1177/10406387251412381. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 41562213; PMCID: PMC12823361.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41562213>

Publication information is downloaded from PubMed. We recognize that not all publications may be found on that site. Please let Liz Nowling know if your publication did not make the list, and it will be included in the next issue.



JOB POSTINGS

Assistant/Associate Clinical Professor Clinical Pathologist

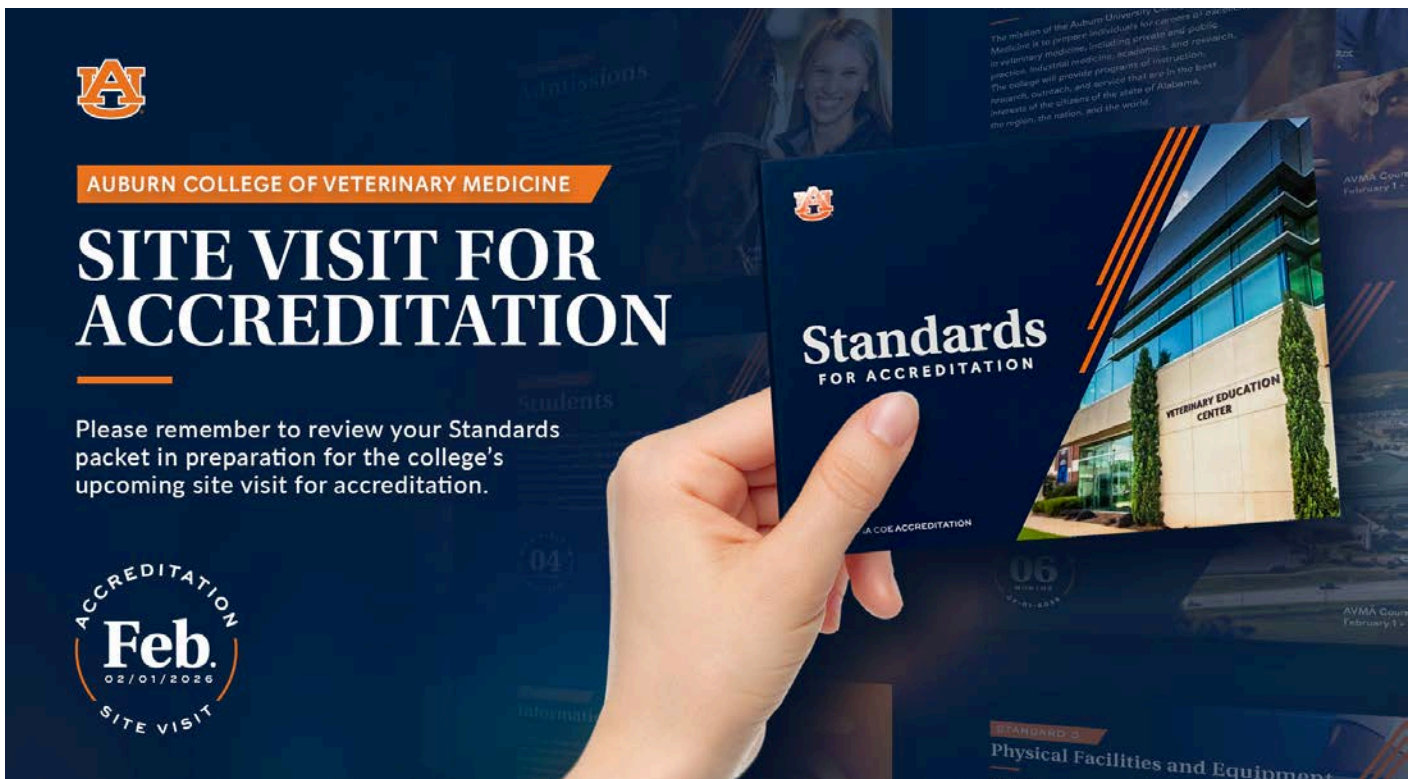
Auburn University's Department of Pathobiology seeks an assistant or associate clinical professor of veterinary clinical pathology for a 12-month clinical-track position. The role includes providing high-quality diagnostic service in the Clinical Pathology Laboratory, training veterinary students, residents, and graduate students, and engaging in didactic teaching and collaborative research. Located in the Wilford & Kate Bailey Small Animal Teaching Hospital, the laboratory supports extensive interaction with clinicians and evaluates samples from university hospitals, outside veterinarians, the Raptor Center, and research groups, while working closely with related diagnostic services.

<https://www.auemployment.com/postings/56902>

Assistant/Associate Professor, Immunology

Auburn University's Department of Pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine seeks a twelve-month, tenure-track, Assistant or Associate Professor in Immunology, with priority given to applications received by February 1, 2026. The successful candidate will develop an extramurally funded research program aligned with departmental strengths, teach Advanced Immunology and foundational immunology, and mentor graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and trainees. The department offers a strong research environment with extensive collaboration opportunities, advanced diagnostic services, core facilities including flow cytometry and imaging, access to HudsonAlpha's genomics resources, and participation in the NCATS-funded Center for Clinical and Translational Science.

<https://www.auemployment.com/postings/56900>



AVMA COE Site Visit - February 1-5, 2026

As you are likely aware, the college is preparing for an **AVMA Council on Education (COE) site visit**, scheduled to take place on-site the week of **February 1-5, 2026**. This is a routine visit, which happens every 7 years, to ensure continued compliance with the 11 standards of accreditation.

We are working hard to showcase the great work of our college and its people. In the coming days, you will receive an envelope through campus mail containing the first of 11 cards with key facts and figures related to how our college meets and exceeds each standard. Please keep your envelope, which you can use to store all 11 cards, scheduled to arrive approximately every 2 weeks, until the site visit to serve as a handy reference. Thank you to the hard work of the marketing and communications team for preparing them for us.

Please reach out to Dr. Camus if you have any questions about the accreditation process or the content of the cards. Specific details of the site visit will be forthcoming as the visit is planned and the itinerary is finalized. You are all important to the visit's success!

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



April 11, 2026
9 am – 1pm

Calling all Volunteers for Vet Fest 2026!

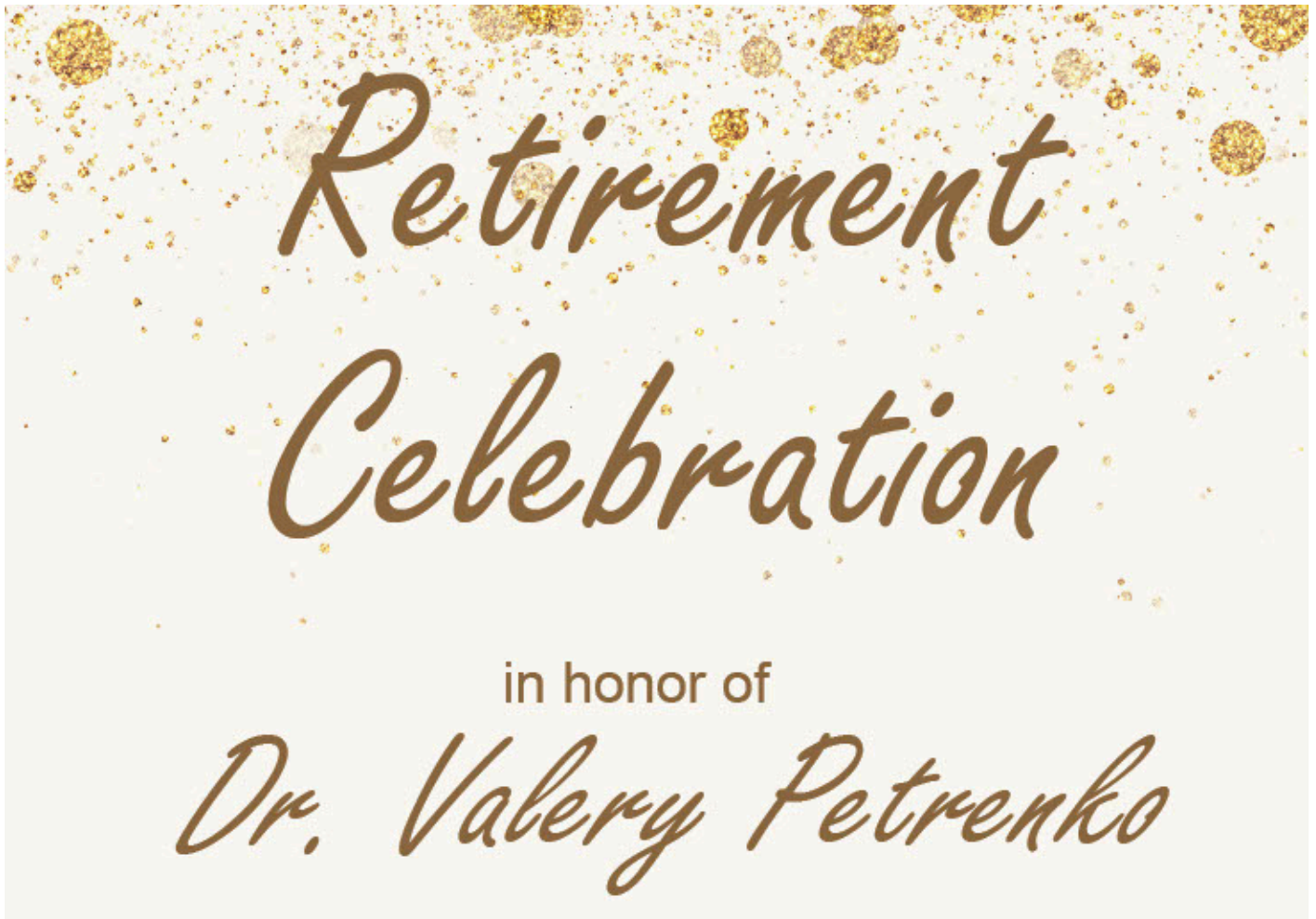
The AUCVM will be hosting its 3rd Annual Vet Fest on Saturday, April 11, 2026, from 9 a.m. to - 1 p.m. CT. Vet Fest is quite possibly the largest event that the AUCVM hosts, in that the entire community is invited to our campus and numerous activities are set up for the public to enjoy. Our student organizations are invited to develop and participate in an activity. However, participation isn't limited to students; we will graciously accept all the help we can get! There are many ways you can contribute to Vet Fest (set up/break down, parking, greeter, sign placement, and more)!

There will be a Vet Fest Informational Meeting on Thursday, January 15th, from 12 - 1 p.m. in VEC 101. This meeting is designed for students; however, anyone is welcome to join!

If you would like to sign up to volunteer to help with an existing activity, please follow this link:

<https://aub.ie/vetmedvol>

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



Dr. Valery Petrenko's Retirement Celebration - February 6, 2026

The Department of Pathobiology is pleased to host a retirement celebration recognizing Dr. Petrenko's exceptional career, steadfast leadership, and lasting contributions to the College of Veterinary Medicine, our students, and the broader veterinary and scientific communities. The celebration will be held on **Friday, February 6, 2026, at 1:00 PM, in the VEC Commons.**

This special gathering will provide an opportunity for colleagues, staff, and friends to come together to reflect on Dr. Petrenko's remarkable tenure and to express our gratitude for the impact he has made over the past two and a half decades. We sincerely hope you will be able to join us in honoring his legacy and celebrating this important milestone!

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



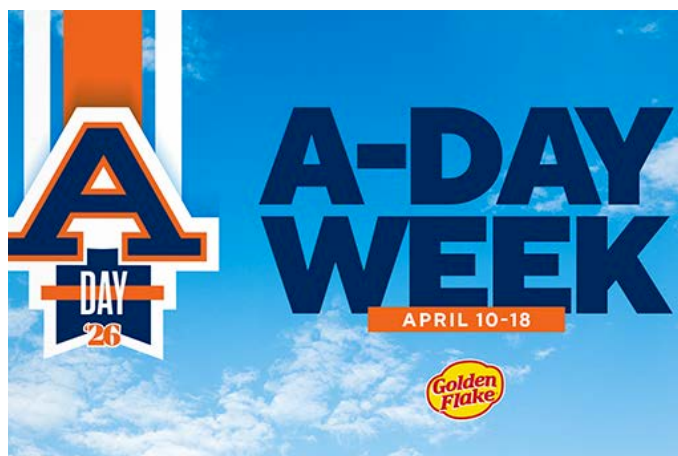
Pathobiology Valentine's Day Party - February 13, 2026

The Department of Pathobiology is having a Valentine's Day Party on **February 13th from 2:30 - 3:30 pm** in **Greene Hall 168**. We will have festive decor and activities to do while we relax, gather in fellowship, and take a moment to enjoy the vibrant holiday!

To keep the vibes extra sweet, we're asking everyone to **bring a pink, white, or red treat to share** — think strawberries, cupcakes, candy hearts, or anything fabulously festive!

Valentine's card exchanges and outfits are encouraged.

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



A-Day Week is Coming to The Plains!

Get ready to experience "A-Day Week" from April 10-18, featuring multiple sports and culminating in the annual A-Day Football Game on Saturday, April 18.

The week's marquee event kicks off Saturday at 2 p.m. at Jordan-Hare Stadium when new head coach Alex Golesh debuts in a traditional spring game format, giving fans their first look at key returners and the newest Auburn Tigers in game action.

Tickets for the A-Day Game will go on sale February 3.

In addition to the game on the field, A-Day will feature the full gameday atmosphere fans love, including Tiger Walk before kickoff and the Auburn University Marching Band in attendance.

Players will also be available to sign autographs on the field after the game.



Financial Advisers Offer Retirement Plan Assistance to AU Employees

Financial advisers from Corebridge, Fidelity, Lincoln, and TIAA are available to help you review the university's voluntary retirement plans and develop your own unique plan for retirement.

In-person and virtual appointment slots are currently open from now until April 2026. You can book an appointment with one or more of the listed advisers to enroll or discuss your retirement plans. Your conversation with your adviser is confidential.

For general questions on your benefits, please email **benefit@auburn.edu**. For questions regarding your individual financial planning, please contact your adviser at Corebridge, Fidelity, Lincoln, or TIAA directly.

<https://aub.ie/x1uRbD>

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



Tracing the history of inoculation in the U.S.

Following up on One Health Awareness Month, Auburn University will host its first **Spring 2026 Medical & Health Humanities Speaker Series** event on Tuesday, Feb. 3, from 4-5 p.m. in Tichenor Hall 215.

The event is free and open to all Auburn University employees and students.

Andrew Wehrman, professor of history at Central Michigan University, will present on the public health legacy of the American Revolution. Wehrman will highlight how individuals and communities across the new United States demanded public access to inoculation and the long-lasting implications of George Washington's order to inoculate the Continental Army.

Black Alumni **WEEKEND**

Dr. Donita McElroy to Speak at Black Alumni Weekend

On Friday, April 10, at noon, Dr. Donita McElroy (DVM '85), our college's first black DVM graduate, will speak about her journey in celebration of **Black Alumni Weekend**.

Dr. McElroy is a solo practitioner in a practice that she established in suburban Atlanta in 1989 and is our college's recipient of the 2026 Black Alumni Award. Her presentation is sure to be both informative and enjoyable.

Details and an RSVP coming soon!

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



CVM AU Staff Council Representatives Needed!

The College of Veterinary Medicine is looking for staff interested in serving on the Auburn University Staff Council. **With 244 staff members, the CVM is eligible for up to 5 representatives, and currently, none are serving.**

This is a valuable opportunity for staff to help ensure that the CVM's perspectives and needs are heard at the university level. The Staff Council meets monthly, and these meetings may be attended either in person or through Zoom, offering flexibility for those with busy schedules.

To learn more about the council and its role, staff can visit the AU Staff Council webpage at <https://aub.ie/staffcouncilcvm>.

Anyone interested in nominating themselves for this important role is encouraged to contact Amy Bylsma at bylsmaj@auburn.edu.



Veterinary Educator Regional Network

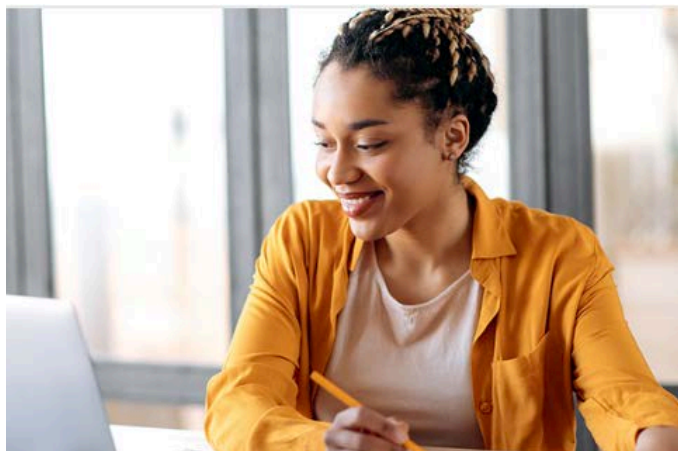
Did you know that Auburn partners with other schools in the Southeast to support educator growth (both faculty and staff), educational research, and networking among veterinary educators?

Auburn is part of the **Southeastern Veterinary Educator Consortium (SEVEC)**, and they want to know what you, as an educator, want! In the past, this has included funding educational research, a research mentorship cohort, virtual programming, and a regional conference. Schools may also share their internal programming with other member schools.

As they plan the upcoming years, tell SEVEC what you want programmatically! Take the survey at <https://aub.ie/SEVEC>.

Both faculty and staff are welcome to participate!

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



Self Development - Aspire Auburn: Leading Self

The *Leading Self* curriculum is designed for any Auburn team member who wants to strengthen their leadership skills. In partnership with LinkedIn Learning, Auburn provides these foundational development courses to support employees who want to grow personally and professionally.

This is a self-paced program, so it won't require time away from your regular responsibilities. Even so, we encourage you to make your own development a priority—it's a worthwhile investment!

Find the course here: aub.ie/leadingself



Faculty Seminar & Visit: Dr. Zohdy - February 10th

Faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend events on February 10 featuring the candidate visitor, Dr. Zohdy. The visit will include a **faculty meeting from 9:30–10:10 a.m. for CVM faculty (APP, DCS, and Pathobiology) in GH168**, during which Dr. Zohdy will present her background, experience, and research and teaching interests, followed by a discussion and Q&A session. **A seminar titled “The Bites that Bind Us: Global Lessons in Vector Ecology for Planetary Health” will be held 10:30–11:30 a.m. in Newsom Auditorium**, with both in-person and virtual attendance options available:

<https://auburn.zoom.us/j/83944531122>

A lunch and meet-and-greet from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. will follow for PAOH and other faculty, students, and staff who were unable to attend the earlier meeting.

Faculty interested in attending meals with Dr. Zohdy during her visit are encouraged to contact Dr. Steury for more information.

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS



Next Faculty Meeting:
Feb. 25 in GH 168 from 1-3 PM

Next Staff Meeting:
Mar. 19 in VEC 246 & 248 from 1-2 PM

A list of official holidays for Auburn employees, including schedules for 2026, is available on the [University Human Resources website](#).

2026 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Holiday	Weekday(s) Observed	Date(s) Observed
New Year's Day	Thursday	Jan. 1, 2026
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (2026)	Monday	Jan. 19, 2026
Memorial Day	Monday	May 25, 2026
Juneteenth Day	Friday	June 19, 2026
Independence Day	Friday	July 3, 2026
Labor Day	Monday	Sept. 7, 2026
Thanksgiving	Wednesday-Friday	Nov. 25-27, 2026
Christmas*	Friday	Dec. 25, 2026

* In addition to the above dates for Christmas Day and New Year's Day, we will close campus on Friday, Dec. 18, 2026, at 4:45 p.m. and re-open on Monday, Jan. 4, 2027, at 7:45 a.m.

- Friday, Dec. 18, 2026: All offices will remain open and operating until 4:45 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 4, 2027: All offices will re-open and resume operations at 7:45 a.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS!

Beell, Trinity L.	14-Feb
Colombari Cheng, Arthur	28-Feb
Conley, Austin C.	13-Feb
Kilbane, Erin M.	9-Feb
LoBue, Troy M.	22-Feb
Pillai, Deepti	28-Feb
Watanabe, Rie	19-Feb
Witherspoon, Kimberly R.	27-Feb
Zhang, Yue	5-Feb

