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Developing the Future of Animal Health through Partnerships

A student's passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM programs, usually begins at an early age. In order to achieve advancements in the area of veterinary science and spark the interest of young adults in the animal health field, Kansas City Animal Health Corridor companies are collaborating with Blue Valley Schools to educate high school students about animal health.

Nationally-recognized programs such as Blue Valley's Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) are now partnering with animal health powerhouses to develop education for the next generation of animal health experts. Specifically, Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. (BIVI), and Bayer HealthCare Animal Health have partnered with CAPS to introduce and support veterinary education to high school students in the CAPS Veterinary Medicine course.

Earlier this year, BIVI veterinarians assisted in curriculum development for the veterinary courses offered by CAPS and presented on several animal health topics. Dr. Kevin Christiansen, who worked closely with CAPS in developing course materials, has provided veterinary case studies and is an ongoing speaker, advisor and mentor to CAPS bioscience classes. Other presentations have featured shelter medicine, veterinary practices and small animal practice demonstrations by Dr. Kyle Malter. Dr. Greg Cline presented a large animal veterinary medicine overview to students that included a hands-on learning experience with cattle. Dr. Dave Husted presented zoonotic diseases and the impact animals have on public health.

In August, three of Bayer's veterinarians, Dr. Cristiano von Simson, Dr. Dan Carey and Dr. Cameon Ohmes, kicked off their partnership with CAPS, leading an informational session for students interested in veterinary science. This session was designed to serve as an introduction to the many different veterinarian careers found within an animal health company, highlighting that becoming a veterinarian does not always mean working in a clinic, or just treating dogs and cats. To further the collaboration with CAPS, Dr. Jennifer Schofield, Dr. Dan Keil and Dr. Jason Nickell designed a project for CAPS students to learn about the drug development and the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine approval process. The students were tasked with creating a mock product that could potentially solve a common animal health problem, or at the least, improve it. They could design either an efficacy or safety study for their "new product."

It's because of partnerships such as these that education and passion for animal health can be extended to the younger generations in the area. Both BIVI and Bayer plan to continue exploring opportunities with CAPS in addition to other STEM educational programs.

About CAPS

CAPS joins junior- and senior-level students from all Blue Valley high schools in a unique learning opportunity to deeply explore their interests in a profession-based learning approach. Learning is student-driven; teachers facilitate the learning process through problem-based projects comprised of authentic and relevant work assignments. CAPS was recognized on a national level with the prestigious 2011 Edison Gold Award in Higher Education, recognizing the intellectual capital, research, planning, design, strategy and marketing that has gone into making a program like CAPS a success. The collaborations with partners such as BIVI and Bayer bring real-world application and the future of veterinary medicine to these students.