

Development of a Community-Based Companion Animal Curriculum

Amy Fischer, PhD

Department of Animal Sciences

College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



The Opportunity:

Americans spend nearly **\$60 billion** annually on their companion animals; this figure grows every year, in spite of other economic setbacks. Students who have experience with companion animals are well-suited to pursue careers within this diverse, expanding industry!

The Challenge:

While most Animal Sciences departments have production animal species available on campus for teaching purposes, very few have companion animal species available for student interaction.

The Solution:

Relationships between universities and local, national, and international agencies provide experiential learning environments in which students thrive!

Here we share examples of how the University of Illinois Animal Sciences Department has woven a network of community teaching partners into its companion animal curriculum.

Potential partners are everywhere!

These models can be replicated at institutions where there is a desire to expand companion animal programs.



Students train dogs at the **Champaign County Humane Society**, and also assist year-round with dog training classes offered through local businesses, such as **Jodie Vee's Dog Training** and **Green Acres Sportsmen's Club**. It is beneficial for the students to observe different training methods and styles, after they have learned the basics of learning theory in the classroom.



The **Champaign County Humane Society** hosts more than 50 interns each year, in multiple positions:

- Adoptions
- Animal Behavior
- Animal Care
- Data Entry
- Executive Assistance
- Medical Laboratory
- Surgical Assistance



Experts from the **ASPCA** (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) demonstrate the nuances of canine behavior and communication.



Study abroad opportunities, especially population control programs, offer excellent hands-on experience. Reputable international partners include **Animal Balance** and **VIDA** (Volunteers for Intercultural and Definitive Adventures).



Our students are masters of community outreach! Here we see a class working with the **HSUS Pets for Life** program in Chicago - - connecting people with resources that will keep animals in their homes.



Thanks to our partners!

Local: CatSnap, Champaign County Animal Control, Champaign County Humane Society, Companion Animal Resource and Education (CARE) Center, Hospice Hearts Sanctuary

State: Animal Protective League Spay/Neuter Clinic, DuPage County Animal Care & Control, Naperville Humane Society, PAWS Chicago, Safe Humane

National: ASPCA, HSUS

International: Animal Balance, VIDA