

# Managing the Veterinary Clinic Enterprise

A Senior Project

presented to

the Faculty of the Animal Science Department

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Science

by

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December, 2013

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## **I d c i**

### General Summary of Veterinary Clinic Processes:

Many of the students in Cal Poly's Animal Science program are studying with the intentions of entering the field of Veterinary Medicine. As per this university's "Learn by Doing" approach to school, it is important that the students have the opportunity to gain a basic foundation of the day-to-day practices of a veterinary clinic. Veterinary medicine is a complex field, with many levels of specialization and focuses on various species.

### Cal Poly Enterprise Information:

Enterprise courses allow students to apply what they have learned in class to real-world situations. These courses provide the environment for students to get outside of the classroom and work with the animals in teams of students. Students can choose from over twenty enterprise classes ranging from breeding and foaling horses to developing and manufacturing meat products like beef jerky and sausage. By participating in the enterprises classes, students learn animal-handling skills and production practices while developing transferable skills in communication, team building and conflict management. Upon graduation, students enter the job market not only with a comprehensive knowledge of animal science, but also with the confidence and experience needed to prepare for a successful career.

### Veterinary Clinic Enterprise:

The Cal Poly Vet Clinic enterprise allows students of Animal Science to gain hands on practice with the skills necessary for a Veterinary Technician to utilize in a veterinary hospital.

Students are selected from a pool of applicants and placed in small groups. These groups are assigned to a two-hour time slot throughout the week at the Veterinary Clinic on campus, which is where the majority of the enterprise activities will take place. In this enterprise, they not only learn technical skills such as clinical lab work, suture techniques, and imaging skills, but they also learn to challenge themselves by pushing beyond comfort levels and by working as a team to diagnoses cases.

## **V e t i c l i n i c E n t e r p r i s e M a n a g e m e n t**

### Enterprise Class Outline:

Throughout the quarter, the enterprise manager is responsible for leading nine weeks of activities, with a different aspect of veterinary medicine highlighted each week. It is important to plan these ahead of time to allow for proper preparation for these activities, as many require special materials. Below is an example itinerary for one quarter of enterprise meetings, with brief descriptions of lab activities.

1. Week One – Introductions/Safety: This is the meeting where the enterprise manager introduces themselves to group members, who also make introductions. It is important to promote a friendly environment that encourages teamwork; all lab members need to feel comfortable with each other in order to succeed in this class. The manager also gives a tour of the Cal Poly Veterinary Clinic and the surrounding vicinities (horse paddock, surgery center, classroom, etc.). The ‘activity’ for the week is a safety and handling/restraint lesson centered on horses, dogs, and cats. Using the resident horses at the vet clinic, the enterprise members

go through a checklist of skills (attached) to test student actions around horses and promote safe practices.

2. Week Two – General Exam Knowledge: During this lab, the manager will walk the students through all of the steps of a general veterinary exam, using either the dogs at the vet clinic, the cats from Cal Poly Cat Shelter, or the resident horses on location. During this exam, the manager will break down all examination procedures for each body system and explain why certain examination processes are important for determining the health of the animal. The students will each practice a general exam, while being guided by the manager. This is a good lab period to practice animal restraint. Furthermore, the students will learn about the importance of charting material. The manager will explain the specific medical chart method for this specific veterinary clinic, and the students will practice their scribing skills while working as a team during their practice general physical exams.
  
3. Week Three – Hematology: This is a very hands-on laboratory. Before any students work with blood, the manager goes over blood-drawing techniques and safety. Furthermore, the manager and students have a discussion involving the various components of blood and the uses of blood and hematological techniques in a clinical setting. Following this, the manager will carefully demonstrate how to draw blood using a horse's jugular vein, and will assist students with the same activity. Next, the group takes the blood collected from the horses and learns

skills such as centrifuging, hematocrits, and blood smears.

4. Week Four – Radiology/Imaging: This lab is best performed if a veterinarian can be present to perform x-rays on live animals. If this is impossible, during this lab the manager is responsible for educating the students on safety practices involved with radiographs and mechanical workings with the x-ray system. The group will then examine film radiographs from the storage center in the veterinary clinic, and identify anatomical landmarks as well as examine various fractures and repair films.
  
5. Week Five – Parasites/Miscellaneous Laboratory Processes: This lab is an opportunity for catch up. If all of the students did not have the time to complete each of the lab processes discussed in the Hematology lab, this is the time to do this. Furthermore, in this lab the manager educates the students on parasitology, discussing the major classes of parasites, their lifecycles, and discussing some of the specific species that are commonly found in a veterinary setting. The manager will demonstrate how to do a ‘fecal float’ for the students, who will also practice this skill. The group will then microscopically analyze the results of their fecal floats.
  
6. Week Six – Veterinary Instruments – During this lab the students will gain a thorough knowledge of different medical equipment, such as stethoscopes, autoclaves, and surgical tools. The manager will explain the uses of various

surgical instruments that are used in a hospital's operating theater (e.g. forceps, scalpels, hemostats, scissors, etc.) and will demonstrate how to use each. The students will also practice packing surgical instruments to be prepped for sanitization, and the manager will explain the purpose of the autoclave. Furthermore, during this lab period the students will gain further practice using tools such as stethoscopes, thermometers, otoscopes, etc.

7. Week Seven - Diseases of Domestic Animals/Vaccinations: During this lecture, the Manager introduces common vaccines used in small animal veterinary practices (e.g. Rabies, Canine Distemper, Bordetella, FVRCP, FeLV, etc.), and discusses the diseases that they prevent. They are also responsible for explaining how to draw up/administer vaccines and showing the students how to assemble and properly dispose of the materials needed. If possible, the manager should try to arrange with the vet clinic to have vaccination appointments scheduled during the lab period so that the students will have the opportunity to practice their general exam knowledge as well as administer vaccines to live pets.
  
8. Week Eight – Critical Care Techniques/ “Suture Lab”: This is the lab period that many of the students get very excited about. During this lab, the manager is going to cover emergency medicine and critical care techniques (trauma wounds, HBC, bite wounds, toxic ingestions) as well as different techniques for suturing. It is the responsibility of the manager to present these topics in a sensitive manner to the students. After educating the students on the different techniques used in

emergency medicine, students will be able to practice suturing hands-on using the tools discussed during the ‘Veterinary Instruments’ lab. It is important to stress to the students the possible safety risks that accompany suturing. The manager is responsible for providing life-like material for students to “repair” (e.g. oranges, artificial vagina material wrapped around sponges, peels of bananas) and also for teaching them the basic methods of suturing (simple interrupted, simple continuous, cruciate).

9. Week Nine – Surgical Procedures: During this lab, students will learn about the basics of surgery from the standpoint of a veterinary technician. The group will begin by discussing sterile surgery preparation of the surgeon, surgery center, and patient. Following the discussion on sterility, the manager will educate group members on various types of anesthesia, weighing the pros and cons of each. The manager should choose a specific surgery to educate the students on, for example, a dental cleaning procedure, and explain the various aspects of the surgery. Finally, the group will discuss post-surgical procedures for the patient. Next, the group will discuss euthanasia. It is important for the manager to remain sensitive on the topic, being careful to explain how these materials work and the application of euthanasia in the veterinary clinic. This could also be an ideal time to discuss the different levels of drug classifications.
  
10. Week 10.A – Lab Practical: This is the final meeting of the enterprise for the quarter, and as such it is an appropriate time to take time to review many of the



major skills learned throughout the previous ten weeks in the enterprise. This will be set up like a standard lab practical, though the participants will not be graded on their performance. There will be a number of stations (for example, blood drawing on a horse, general exam and record on a dog, suture practice, drug dosage practice, blood smears and microscopic cell identification, fecal floats, etc.) set up around the clinic, and each student will rotate through all of the stations. This is a good time for them to get some final hands-on practice in a variety of veterinary skills. During this lab period, it is also important that the instructor hand out evaluation forms to each of the students, and asks for their input/suggestions from the activity portion of the quarter.

11. Week 10.B. – Make Up Lab: This course is a one unit class that is graded as pass/no-pass, so participation is the only important factor in determining whether the student will receive credit. If a student cannot attend their lab session, it is their responsibility to check with their instructor and try to schedule a time throughout the week when they can attend another lab section. If the student fails to do so, they will have the opportunity to participate in a “make up lab” towards the end of the quarter. During this session, the student will be volunteering around the clinic to help with any cleaning projects, organizing, or miscellaneous tasks for 2 hours on the assigned Saturday. If the student does not participate in the make up lab, then they will not receive a passing grade for the course and will therefore receive no credit.

## **Ri a d Safe I e**

This enterprise is a class with most activity sessions focused on the practice of various medical techniques on live animals. As such, it is important that the students realize the risks that they are taking by enrolling in the course. Although most animal accidents are not fatal, students face the risk of needless injury due to a lack of safety awareness. Preoccupation, haste, impatience, and frustration are often emotions associated with animal-related accidents.

Prior to participating in any lab activity or handling animals in any way, the students are required to fill out a series of forms, including the Cal Poly Release of Liability Agreement form, Health Insurance Information form, and a self-evaluation of equine abilities form (see attached). There can be no exceptions to the policy that all three of these forms must be turned in by participants to the enterprise manager prior to any hands-on participation.

\*Note: attached you will find a Cal Poly Release of Liability Agreement form, Health Insurance Information form, and a self-evaluation of equine abilities form



Animal Science Department  
California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA 9340

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY, PROMISE NOT TO SUE, ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND  
AGREEMENT TO PAY CLAIMS**

**Activity:** Animal Science Department Courses and Related Cal Poly Animal Activities

**Activity Date(s) and Time(s):** July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014

**Activity Location(s):** Cal Poly Campus and non-campus activities

In consideration for being allowed to participate in this Activity, on behalf of myself and my next of kin, heirs and representatives, I **release from all liability and promise not to sue** the State of California, the Trustees of The California State University, California Polytechnic State University, the Cal Poly Corporation, and their employees, officers, directors, volunteers and agents (collectively "University") from any and all claims, **including claims of the University's negligence**, resulting in any physical or psychological injury (including paralysis and death), illness, damages, or economic or emotional loss I may suffer because of my participation in this Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity.

I am voluntarily participating in this Activity. I am aware of the risks associated with traveling to/from and participating in this Activity, which include but are not limited to physical or psychological injury, pain, suffering, illness, disfigurement, temporary or permanent disability (including paralysis), economic or emotional loss, and/or death. I understand that these injuries or outcomes may arise from my own or other's actions, inaction, or negligence; conditions related to travel; or the condition of the Activity location(s). **Nonetheless, I assume all related risks, both known or unknown to me, of my participation in this Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity.**

I agree to **hold** the University **harmless** from any and all claims, including attorney's fees or damage to my personal property that may occur as a result of my participation in this Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity. If the University incurs any of these types of expenses, I agree to reimburse the University. If I need medical treatment, I agree to be financially responsible for any costs incurred as a result of such treatment. I am aware and understand that I should carry my own health insurance.

I am 18 years or older. **I understand the legal consequences of signing this document, including (a) releasing the University from all liability, (b) promising not to sue the University, (c) and assuming all risks of participating in this Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity.**

I understand that this document is written to be as broad and inclusive as legally permitted by the State of California. I agree that if any portion is held invalid or unenforceable, I will continue to be bound by the remaining terms.

I have read this document, and I am signing it freely. No other representations concerning the legal effect of this document have been made by me.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





Animal Science Department  
California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA 9340

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY, PROMISE NOT TO SUE, ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND  
AGREEMENT TO PAY CLAIMS**

***If Participant is under 18 years of age:***

I am the parent or legal guardian of the Participant. **I understand the legal consequences of signing this document, including (a) releasing the University from all liability on my and the Participant's behalf, (b) promising not to sue on my and the Participant's behalf, (c) and assuming all risks of the Participant's participation in this Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity.** I allow Participant to participate in this Activity. I understand that I am responsible for the obligations and acts of Participant as described in this document. I agree to be bound by the terms of this document.

I have read this document, and I am signing it freely. No other representations concerning the legal effect of this document have been made by me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Minor Participant's Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Minor Participant's Parent/Guardian (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Minor Participant's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# CAL POLY

California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0255  
Animal Science Department (805) 756-2419

## HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION

### Animal Science Department Courses and Related Cal Poly Animal Activities

July 1, 2013– June 30, 2014

**SAFETY:** Accidents can be prevented by using good judgment, preventive maintenance and figuring things out before you do them. Safety for the “handler” should always come first.

The University does not maintain comprehensive medical insurance for students injured in class or related activities.

The University provides limited medical services for students at the University Health Center.

It is strongly recommended that students carefully consider the augmentation of those limited services through the purchase of a comprehensive health insurance program including ambulance and major medical services. Student health insurance is available through the Student Health Center or directly at: <http://hcs.calpoly.edu>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Driver License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person to notify in case of an emergency:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Insurance Company:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE/ACTIVITY : \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Self Evaluation of Abilities Related to Horses

**DIRECTIONS:**

Answer the following self-evaluation questions as realistically as possible. It will not be used to determine your grade. It will be of value in helping you plan your direction of education with the horse.

**QUESTIONS**

*Circle the number that indicates your ability. The scale ranges from 1-5, with 1 indicating little or no experience and with 5 indicating you have a good grasp of the concept and practice it.*

**Beginning of Quarter.**

**End of Quarter**

1	2	3	4	5	1. I am aware of and practice safety procedures around a riding horse.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	2. I can select feed, water, and care for a riding horse in a corral.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	3. I can identify horse by color, sex, and markings.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	4. I can select proper and safe equipment for a riding horse and attire for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	5. I can safely catch, lead, and turn a riding horse loose.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	6. I can select equipment and properly groom a riding horse.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	7. I can pick up and clean the feet of a riding horse.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	8. I can prepare the horse and safely mount and dismount a riding horse.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	9. I am aware of the following ways to signal a horse for riding: reins, body language, legs and voice.	1	2	3	4	5
					<b>PLEASE CONTINUE AND SIGN ON OPPOSITE SIDE</b>					

## Student Self Evaluation of Abilities Related to Horses

1	2	3	4	5	10. I am aware of the following ways to develop my seat for riding in the arena and hills: focus, breathing, centering, body position	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	11. I can properly cool a horse after riding.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	12. My level of ability at performing the following maneuvers on a riding horse are:	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	a. suppling exercises/ warm up	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	b. walk	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	c. trot	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	d. lope	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	e. stop	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	f. back	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	g. turn a horse around	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	h. open and close a gate	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	i. cross obstacles	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	j. ride individually	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	k. ride in a group	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	l. maneuver around obstacles	1	2	3	4	5

**Beginning of Quarter Signature**

**End of Quarter Signature**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Enterprise Student Selection**

The Veterinary Clinic Enterprise is a popular course for Animal Students because it provides a very unique opportunity for undergraduate students to gain experience in a fully functional veterinary clinic. This being said, there is a limited number of student spots available for each quarter that the enterprise is offered. During the first week of each quarter, fliers advertising the enterprise are placed throughout the Animal Science building, specifying the times that the enterprise will take place through the week and providing the students with an application to fill and turn in to the overseeing professor by the end of the first week of classes for the quarter. This application and the prospective student's resume and class schedule are the tools that the enterprise managers as well as overseeing professor use to narrow down the pool of applicants to select the individuals who will be enrolled in the class. Once all of the applications are selected, the student managers and the overseeing professor will go through them and select the students based on their availability, previous experience with animals, year in school, and the professionalism of their application. Finally, the managers are responsible for notifying the selected applicants with information about the first meeting, as well as the applicants who will not be participating; encouraging them to continue to apply each quarter the enterprise is offered. This notification is usually done via email.

## **Leading The Enterprise:**

The role of enterprise manager is unique because it puts the responsibilities of an instructor onto someone who the student participants consider to be a peer. Because of this, it is important that the manager remembers that it is their primary responsibility to serve the students. The goal of this course is to focus on the educational growth and individual development of the



participants. It is to help them develop skills that will allow them to perform as effectively as possible in the field of veterinary medicine, and to learn important skills in the veterinary world that they would otherwise not have the opportunity to practice. The following are particular skills that a manager should be well versed in for the enterprise to run as smoothly as possible:

- a. Extracurricular Experience in Veterinary Medicine: In order for one to successfully instruct students on skills that they will learn about this medical-based field, it is important that the manager has real-world experience and extensive practice with all of the skills presented in lab. While the approach of this course is “Learn by Doing,” the instructor should not be learning the skills at the pace of the students whom they are trying to teach. It is very important that the manager is able to answer most of the questions that their students will ask in their lab sessions, so although prior work experience in a veterinary clinic is not necessary for the manager, it is highly encouraged that he or she has spent extensive time in a fully functional veterinary clinic.
  
- b. Communication Skills: This enterprise encourages students to reach beyond their comfort levels. Though some students who enroll in this course have lots of experience in veterinary hospitals, this class is the first exposure that many have ever had to the animal medical world. Because of this, the instructor must be very careful about the way that they approach their communication with their students. It is essential to provide a calm, encouraging environment where the manager can encourage the participants to push beyond their comfort zone. It is also important that

the teaching environment mimics that of a real clinic. The manager must communicate with the lab members in a way that encourages a team-based dynamic, making sure that he or she works as an integral part of the team, not just as the instructor figure.

### **Personal Experience:**

I was asked to participate as a manager for this enterprise over three quarters, spanning between my third and fourth years at Cal Poly. During this time, I found that I experienced great personal growth through the exponential development of my ability to effectively communicate in a team setting, organizational skills, confidence in my technical veterinary abilities, and leadership faculties.

The notion of ‘Student Managers’ for the Animal Science Department’s enterprise activities is unique because it places these managers in a challenging leadership position. Because I was given the task of teaching students who were in my peer group, and often older than me, I had to make sure that my communication skills were such that effectively put me in the position of power without causing me to come across as condescending or superior. It was important to motivate the students in my labs effectively, without an abundance of authority. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to perfect my communication skills as a manager over a very long time-span, which gave me the ability for some trial and error. I learned a few very key points that made the process very smooth. First of all, I made it a goal to empower all of my team members, which is key in ensuring that they gained as much as possible from each lab session. It is important to establish a relaxed environment, where everyone is encouraged to share opinions and ideas. The manager must also insist that everyone respect one another and

help each other in perfecting learning skills and mastering tasks. Veterinary medicine as a field is an environment where effective team communication is always vital, so participative decision making skills and active involvement from the whole team is necessary.

The organizational skills necessary for undertaking this task are extensive. In order to effectively manage any large group, particularly one undertaking tasks that involve hazardous features such as live animals and medical supplies, the student manager has to approach each week knowing exactly what is going to be needed for the week's lab periods. The particular details that I learned I needed for managing the enterprise involved aspects such as a thorough spreadsheet containing every participant's contact information and lab period, attendance worksheets, an organized binder containing enough copies of all handouts for each topic discussed, a master schedule specifying the topics and activities for each week of the quarter, and a spreadsheet containing the contact information of the veterinarian leading the enterprise as well as that of the other manager(s). I found that in order to lead each lab efficiently, I needed to be at the Cal Poly Vet Clinic roughly fifteen minutes prior to student arrival to collect/ set up the lab's supplies and gather the necessary animals from their respective living spaces. This enterprise taught me that organizational skills are not only important as a leader, but in my personal life, to ensure that I perform all of my tasks to the highest degree of efficiency.

This enterprise allowed me to discover the three-pronged approach to learning that I have found to be the most effective for myself, not only in the veterinary world but also in learning in general. Firstly, my research of a particular skill is necessary so that I may gain a foundation of knowledge surrounding it. Next, I practice the skill until I feel very comfortable performing it. Finally, I take the knowledge I have compiled through research and practice and I teach the skill, forcing myself to clearly explain reasons behind each step and to perform each step

meticulously. This allows me to push myself beyond my comfort level so that I may gain a total grasp on whatever facet of knowledge I am focusing on. The Veterinary Clinic Enterprise allowed me to apply this learning approach on various technical veterinary skills, which has exponentially boosted my confidence in myself as a skilled veterinary technician. The techniques that I teach in this enterprise are applicable to the animal medicine industry as a whole, and by teaching these skills I am required to have a very thorough knowledge of how to accurately perform each of them. By spending roughly eight to ten hours at the vet clinic per week each quarter teaching handling, restraint, laboratory, and other technical skills, I not only get the opportunity to pass practical knowledge to the participants, I extend my own knowledge on these procedures, therefore having the opportunity to perfect them.

Teaching this enterprise was the first chance that I had that allowed me to cultivate the skills that are necessary to be an effective leader in a professional university setting. Though I have already expounded upon on the communication skills required for effective leadership in this role, I would like to explain further leadership skills that I gained from participating as a manager for this enterprise. First of all, I learned the importance of empowering my students. The vast majority of all participants were unskilled in veterinary practices, and the tasks that were assigned to them challenged their comfort levels. As a leader, I found that it was my role to assist my students by encouraging them to accomplish some of the more dangerous or intimidating tasks. It was important while doing this to remind the students to remain calm and to trust their instincts. Working hard to motivate the people I was working with and giving praise whenever it was due was the most effective leadership method I observed in my position. Another aspect of leadership that I discovered was the importance of setting a good example. It was important for me to be extremely thorough, especially in maintaining safety and sanitary

practices, because the participants looked up to me as an example of how to act in a veterinary clinic. I worked hard to maintain a calm and positive demeanor while promoting an enjoyable, exciting educational setting. Whenever anything went wrong (animal behavioral issues, restraint problems, equipment malfunctions, etc.), as long as I did not panic or show any signs of distress my students would follow suit and also stay composed. This is an important skill not only as an enterprise manager, but also as a professional in the veterinary industry in general.

I made a personal commitment to making this the most rewarding and informative experience for the students I was responsible for teaching for three quarters, and by investing myself as a leader and keeping a positive attitude throughout the experience, I was able to not only effectively teach others, but learn many valuable skills myself. These are skills that I will carry me not only as a veterinary professional, but also in my life as a future business associate, family member, and participant in a community setting in general.