

Jaclyn Wilson
AAFV Scholarship Award 2019
AQUAVET® II

AAFV Scholarship Committee,

I want to personally thank you again for being honored with one of the 2019 AAFV Scholarships to help offset the cost of AQUAVET® II. It was an incredible learning opportunity and I was able to learn so much from the amazing faculty that rotate through and teach.

One of the driving reasons for my participation in AQUAVET® II was my passion for aquatic animal medicine. There is a recognized need for more aquatic animal veterinarians in the field and I hope to contribute to this upon graduation. I have a passion for outreach and education and also hope to return to AQUAVET® one day as an instructor to help educate the next generation of aquatic veterinarians. It is so hard to find advanced, hands on training in this field and the AQUAVET® program fills a much needed niche. It was an honor to be chosen again to participate in the respected program.

AQUAVET® II is a comparative pathology course focused on the major diseases within a variety of phyla. Even though I do not plan on pursuing a specialty in pathology, I find it incredibly helpful and beneficial to study the comparative pathology in an effort to truly understand the diseases I will be treating as a practicing clinician. For this purpose, you need to know what is happening at the cellular level. The hands-on histopathology helps tie the cellular physiology and pathology together to make the whole picture. I feel much more confident in my ability to identify and understand aquatic animal diseases from my training at AQUAVET® II.

We began the course with a focus on invertebrates, especially bivalves, and diseases of importance in their production. We progressed through the course to learn about shrimp aquaculture and disease. We studied a variety of phyla of fishes, both warm water and cold water species, and covered major diseases that have impacts both aquaculture and wild populations. We also learned about important amphibian disease that have major ecological and economic impact on populations.

The importance of AQUAVET® goes beyond just the academic scope. One of my favorite parts about the program is what they lovingly refer to as the “parade of stars”. Academics from across the country are brought to AQUAVET® to teach their area of expertise. It is an incredible opportunity to meet colleagues from around the country and network across this small field of veterinary medicine. Being able to bond with and spend time with other veterinarians and veterinary students from around the world builds a supportive and intricate community in which the profession as a whole can benefit from as the AQUAVET® students grow as veterinarians.

I would highly recommend the AQUAVET® program to all aspiring aquatic veterinarians or any veterinarians looking to learn more about aquatic animal medicine. With an advanced education in aquatic medicine being so hard to come by, it is imperative to consider programs like AQUAVET® as a route in which to expand and improve this small and growing field.

Thank you again for the opportunity and I look forward to sharing all I have learned with other aspiring aquatic veterinarians!

Jaclyn Wilson, Western University of Health Sciences, Class of 2021