

Research Day

The Center was a major sponsor of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine's Phi Zeta Research Day held on September 16, 2024. This event serves as a venue for students to gain experience in research presentation skills through both oral and poster presentation opportunities. Students learn to critically evaluate research while networking and collaborating with other researchers throughout the day. Phi Zeta Research Day presentations were delivered by graduate students, professional students, residents, and post-doctoral fellows.

Twenty-one graduate students, 19 professional veterinary students, three clinical residents, and three post-doctoral scholars presented at this year's Phi Zeta Research Day. In addition, a new presenter category was introduced for Dual-degree (DVM-MS/PhD) students. In this category, four dual-DVM/MS students and two dual-DVM/PhD students presented. Student presentations were judged by faculty with a rubric based on their performance. Travel awards were provided to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. The award winners of Phi Zeta Research Day are highlighted below.

2024 UTCVM Research Day Awards

Resident and Post-Doc Category

Top Resident Presentation - Dr. Lily Davis, Small Animal Clinical Sciences

"Comparison of the effects of hydromorphone alone and combined with medetomidine-vatinoxan or dexmedetomidine on the induction dose of alfaxalone and selected cardiopulmonary variables in healthy dogs anesthetized with sevoflurane"

Mentor: Dr. Chiara Hampton

Top Post-Doc Presentation - Dr. Prachi Namjoshi, Biomedical and Diagnostic Sciences

"Tick vesicular-associated membrane proteins assist in the entry and survival of rickettsial pathogen in the arthropod vector"

Mentor: Dr. Girish Neelakanta

Graduate Student Category

1st Place - Caroline Moses, Comparative & Experimental Medicine

"Enhanced membrane composition for lipid nanoparticle vascular drug delivery"

Mentor: Dr. Deidra Mountain

Travel award: \$500.00

2nd Place (tied) - Lichao Liu, Comparative & Experimental Medicine

"Rickettsia parkeri infection in human endothelial cells is affected by NAD⁺ and a NAD-dependent enzyme"

Mentor: Dr. Girish Neelakanta

Travel award: \$300.00



A group of veterinary students pose using the Phi Zeta Research Day selfie frame.

Graduate Student Category (Continued)

3rd Place – Amy Webb, Comparative & Experimental Medicine

“Histopathology of corals showing tissue loss during an unusual coral mortality event in Jamaican north coast reefs”

Mentor: Dr. Michelle Dennis

Travel award: \$300.00



Graduate students present their research presentations at Phi Zeta Research Day.

Dual Degree (DVM/MS or DVM/PhD) Student Category

1st Place and Phi Zeta Award for Excellence in Human Health – Grace Malla, DVM-MS Class of 2026

“The pharmacokinetics, relative bioavailability, and pilot pharmacodynamics of subcutaneous levamisole in goats”

Mentor: Dr. Joseph Smith

Travel award: \$400.00 and a \$250.00 cash award from Phi Zeta

2nd Place – Lindsey Rice, DVM-MS Class of 2026

“Tick-borne pathogen prevalence and the standardization of necropsy protocols In southeastern North American black bears (Ursus americanus)”

Mentor: Dr. Richard Gerhold

Travel award: \$300.00

3rd Place – Olivia Escher-Price, DVM-PhD Class of 2028

“The bioavailability and pharmacokinetics of intravenous and subcutaneous famotidine in domestic goats (Capra aegagrus hircus)”

Mentor: Dr. Joseph Smith

Travel award: \$200.00



Students and faculty pose together in the hallway at Phi Zeta Research Day.

Veterinary Student Category

1st Place – MaCayla Clements, Class of 2027

“Using blow flies as biological drones to remotely detect outbreaks of Histomonas meleagridis in wild turkey populations in Tennessee”

Mentors: Drs. Richard Gerhold and Charity Owings

Travel award: \$200.00

2nd Place (Tied) – Selina Boone, Class of 2026

“Performance evaluation of a developing analyzer for measuring canine total thyroxine (TT4)”

Mentor: Drs. Alejandro Esteller-Vico and Luca Giori

Travel award: \$200.00

2nd Place (Tied) – Haley Richardson, Class of 2027

“An investigation into alternative forages for grazing sheep”

Mentor: Dr. Andrea Lear

Travel award: \$200.00

2nd Place (Tied) – Micah Roberts, Class of 2026

“Biomechanical evaluation of VetWelding resorbable pin and plates on cadaveric simulated metatarsal fractures”

Mentor: Dr. Darryl Millis

Travel award: \$200.00

3rd Place (Tied) – Annalisa Wager, Class of 2026

“Incidence and radiographic appearance of the os clitoridis (baubellum) in female domesticated ferrets (Mustela putorius furo)”

Mentor: Dr. Silke Hecht

Travel award: \$200.00

3rd Place (Tied) – Evie Yazbec, Class of 2027

“Hematological and Biochemical Parameters in Mexican Axolotls (Ambystoma mexicanum)”

Mentor: Dr. Emi Knafo

Travel award: \$200.00



Students present their research presentations at Phi Zeta Research Day.

Faculty Awards



In addition to the student awards, two faculty awards were also presented at Research Day. The Boehringer Ingelheim Faculty Research Mentoring Award was awarded to Dr. Sreekumari Rajeev, and the Zoetis Award for Veterinary Research Excellence was awarded to Dr. Joseph Smith.



Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, Dr. David Anderson (pictured left in both photos) poses with Dr. Sreekumari Rajeev (pictured right on left photo) and Dr. Joseph Smith (pictured right on right photo) with their faculty awards at Phi Zeta Research Day.



Students and faculty participate in Phi Zeta Research Day activities.