

The Aubieclave Report

AUBURN UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE



THE DISCOVERY SPOTLIGHT

The Clinical Pathology Diagnostic Lab

Every day, the Auburn University Clinical Pathology Diagnostic Lab helps turn samples into answers that support animal health and patient care. From routine bloodwork to complex diagnostic cases, the lab provides critical information that veterinarians rely on to diagnose disease, monitor treatment, and make informed decisions. We spoke with **Dr. Maria Naskou**, Head of the Clinical Pathology Diagnostic Lab, to learn more about the lab's services, recent innovations, and the team behind the work.

At its core, the laboratory's mission is simple: provide accurate, timely, and clinically meaningful results that help veterinarians deliver the best possible care. The lab offers a full range of services, including hematology, clinical chemistry, urinalysis, coagulation testing, blood banking, and cytology. These services support clinicians within the Auburn University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, as well as referring veterinarians and researchers across a variety of disciplines.

One of the things that sets the Clinical Pathology Diagnostic Laboratory apart is the strong partnership between the laboratory team and the clinicians they support.

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In its role in supporting the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Dr. Naskou explains, **“Our laboratory is not simply generating test results. We work closely with clinicians to interpret findings in the context of each individual patient."** This collaborative approach helps transform laboratory data into valuable insights that support diagnosis, treatment decisions, and patient care.

Beyond diagnostics, the laboratory also serves as a classroom. Veterinary students, interns, and residents gain hands-on experience with tangible cases, learning firsthand how laboratory medicine contributes to diagnosis and treatment. This integration of service and education is one of the aspects Dr. Naskou finds most rewarding. **"In many ways, every sample that comes through the door is both a diagnostic case and a potential teaching case,"** she said, giving future veterinarians valuable experience they can carry into their careers.

The lab has also celebrated several exciting developments in recent years, particularly in providing care around the clock. One of the most notable is the creation of an after-hours student worker program, staffed primarily by veterinary students. The program gives clinicians access to diagnostic testing after normal business hours while providing students with career-defining lessons, making it a win-win for both patient care and education.

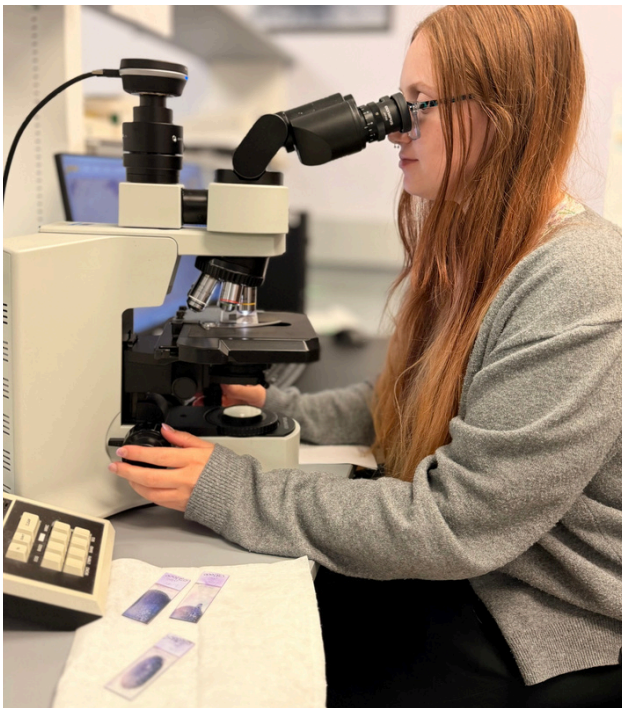
Building on that effort, the laboratory has also added after-hours instrumentation in the STAT laboratory, ensuring essential testing remains available even when the main laboratory is closed. After all, emergencies don't always happen during business hours. As Dr. Naskou joked, **"Sometimes an emergency patient doesn't understand that it's 9:00 p.m. and the laboratory has technically finished its day."** These additions help the laboratory continue supporting clinicians and patients whenever the need arises.

Of course, none of these accomplishments would be possible without the people who make the laboratory run every day. The Clinical Pathology Diagnostic Lab is powered by a team of medical technologists, laboratory assistants, residents, faculty, and students who each play an important role in delivering high-quality diagnostic services. According to Dr. Naskou, their shared commitment is what makes the difference.



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“What I appreciate most about our team is their commitment to the animals and clinicians we serve," she said. **"Every sample represents an animal whose veterinarian is waiting for information that can help guide its care."**



That sense of purpose is at the heart of everything the laboratory does. For the team, the work combines science, problem-solving, collaboration, and real-world impact. As Dr. Naskou noted, **"No two days are exactly the same."** Each case offers a new challenge, a new opportunity to learn, and a new chance to make a difference. In many ways, every sample that comes through the door is both a diagnostic case and a teaching opportunity, making the Clinical Pathology Diagnostic Lab an essential part of Auburn's missions of education and research!





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Welcome to The Jungle!



Daniel Udochi

OUR NEW GRAD STUDENT (C. WANG)

Daniel Udochi is a Ph.D. student in Dr. Wang's lab. Originally from Lagos, Nigeria, he earned degrees in Microbiology and Biomedical Sciences from Auburn University before continuing his studies in Pathobiology. Daniel's research focuses on understanding how specific pathogens cause disease and contribute to the transmission and emergence of zoonotic diseases. Outside the lab, he enjoys going on walks, playing pickleball, and spending time in the kitchen, where he loves to cook and exchange recipes with friends and colleagues.

Julia Carboni

OUR NEW GRAD STUDENT (M. CRIADO)

Julia Carboni is a Ph.D. student in Dr. Miria Criado's lab. Originally from São Paulo, Brazil, she earned her degree in Veterinary Medicine from the University of São Paulo. After completing a short-term internship at Auburn last year, Julia was excited to return and continue her academic journey in Pathobiology. Outside of her studies, she enjoys adventure, staying active, and trying new things, bringing an enthusiastic and energetic spirit to the department.



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Welcome to The Jungle!



Sapana Tiwari

OUR NEW GRAD STUDENT (L. HUBER)

Sapana Tiwari recently joined the Department of Pathobiology as a Ph.D. student in Dr. Laura Huber's lab. Originally from Nepal, she earned her Master's degree in Environmental Studies from Kentucky State University, where she researched *Nosema ceranae* infections in honey bees and the honey bee microbiome. Outside of research, Sapana enjoys traveling, trying new foods, and spending time with family.

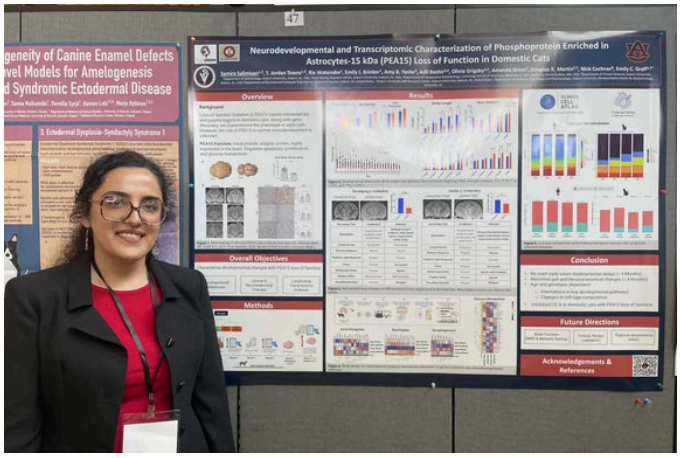
Noel Claudio Soto

OUR NEW GRAD STUDENT (P. BARGER)

Noel Claudio Soto is a Ph.D. student under the mentorship of Dr. Priscilla Barger. Originally from Puerto Rico, Noel earned his bachelor's degree in Industrial Microbiology from the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo and a master's degree in Entomology and Plant Pathology from Auburn University. His research focuses on microbiomes and foodborne pathogens. Outside the lab, he enjoys smoking meats, learning about space exploration and history, and spending time with his mischievous corgi.



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Samira Salimiyan Received ICCFGG Travel Grant

Congratulations to Ph.D. student Samira Salimiyan (Dr. E. Graff's Lab) on receiving a travel grant to present her research at the ICCFGG conference hosted by Cornell University!

Samira showcased her work on cell-type deconvolution in the feline brain, sharing her results with an international audience of scientists. This recognition highlights the innovative work being conducted in the lab and Samira's dedication to advancing our understanding of feline neurobiology.



Dr. Jey Koehler Received the ACVP Mid-Career Excellence Award

Congratulations to Dr. Jey Koehler on receiving the 2026 American College of Veterinary Pathologists (ACVP) Mid-Career Excellence Award! Dr. Koehler was recognized for her leadership in expanding global access to pathobiology education and her significant scholarly contributions, including widely adopted glioma classification work. The award also highlights her lasting impact as a mentor and leader within the veterinary pathobiology community. As noted in one of her nomination letters, *"For many early- and mid-career women in our field, she represents what is possible and what sustained professional impact looks like."*

We congratulate Dr. Koehler on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her many contributions to veterinary pathobiology, education, and mentorship!



Dr. Camila Andrea Cuadrado Guevara Presents Research at AAAP Annual Meeting

Dr. Camila Andrea Cuadrado Guevara (Dr. C. Leyson's Lab) presented her research at the American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. Her presentation was titled "Genetic Characterization of APMV-1 from Poultry and Wild Birds along the American Pacific Flyway."

Sharing research at a national meeting provides an important opportunity to contribute to scientific discussions and connect with experts in the field. We congratulate Camila on this accomplishment and on representing Auburn University at the conference!



Dr. Raimundo Javier Espejo Marquinez Presents Research at AAAP Annual Meeting

Dr. Raimundo Javier Espejo Marquinez (Dr. R. Hauck's Lab) presented his research at the American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. His presentation was titled "Adaptation of APMV-1 and Immune Responses in Chickens."

Sharing research at a national meeting provides an important opportunity to contribute to scientific discussions and connect with experts in the field. We congratulate Raimundo on this accomplishment and on representing Auburn University at the conference!



Dr. Jordan Towns Featured in the CVM News

Assistant clinical professor Dr. Jordan Towns lives by a simple mantra.

“Anything worth doing is worth overdoing, right?” she said.

In the case of the three-time Auburn graduate, that full-throttle approach extends far outside the laboratory and her interests in pathology and cytology. In addition to winning national championships in the sport of autocross, Towns as competed for Team USA in modern pentathlon and will soon begin her second full season as an NCAA football official.

Read more about this article here:

www.vetmed.auburn.edu/blog/cvm-news/auburn-vet-med-professor-chases-excellence-far-beyond-the-classroom



Virology Lab Achieves Major Accreditation Milestone

Congratulations to the Virology team on achieving ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation for its rabies serology testing services, including both FAVN and RFFIT assays. This accomplishment shows the team's dedication, expertise, and commitment to delivering high-quality, accurate diagnostic testing.

In addition to this milestone, the laboratory has worked closely with the CVM-IIT team to enhance the FAVN submission and reporting process. A new online fillable submission form is expected to launch soon, helping streamline workflows and providing veterinarians and clients with a more efficient process for obtaining travel-related rabies serology documentation. This achievement and ongoing innovation show their commitment to excellence and customer service!



Dr. Nancy Merner Named Among Women Who Shape the State

Auburn University associate professor Nancy Merner was named a 2025 Woman Who Shapes the State, an honor recognizing women across Alabama who are creating meaningful change through leadership, service, and innovation.

At Auburn, Merner leads a breast cancer genetics research program and the Gene Machine, a mobile research unit that travels across Alabama to study hereditary breast cancer while building trust and connecting communities with critical resources. With more than 60% of Alabama's population considered medically underserved, including the entire population of 85% of its counties, her work bridges gaps through both laboratory research and direct community engagement.

Learn more at the Women Who Shape the State website:

https://www.thisisalabama.org/women-who-shape-the-state/

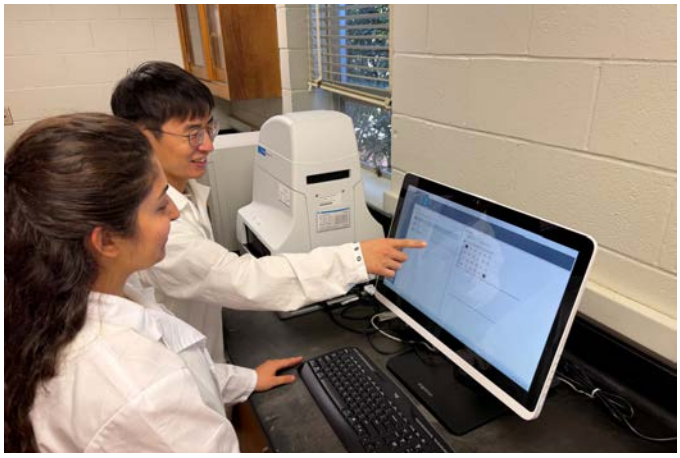


Dr. Rie Watanabe Earns SCYM(ASCP)CM Certification

Congratulations to Dr. Rie Watanabe on successfully passing the Specialist in Cytometry SCYM(ASCP)^{CM} certification examination offered by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification. This credential recognizes expertise in flow cytometry and cell sorting, including instrument operation, quality control, assay development, data analysis, and laboratory best practices.

Her dedication to professional growth helps ensure the continued quality, credibility, and success of the Flow Lab facility and the research community it serves.

Congratulations to Dr. Watanabe on this outstanding achievement!



Exploring Cell Metabolism with the Agilent Seahorse XF Flex

The Department of Pathobiology and College of Veterinary Medicine recently added two powerful new research tools: the **Agilent Seahorse XF Flex Analyzer** and **a Compresstome Vibrating Microtome**. Together, they allow researchers to study how living cells and tissues use energy in real time, helping scientists better understand diseases such as cancer, gastrointestinal disorders, and infections.

Often described as a "fitness tracker" for cells, the XF Flex Analyzer shows how cells respond to different conditions and treatments without harming them. The equipment will support research in cancer, microbiome science, and immunology and is housed in Dr. Sanjeev Narayanan's lab.

Researchers interested in using the technology should contact **Dr. Farnaz Yousefi (fzy0027@auburn.edu)** for access and training opportunities.

Help us make dreams a reality!

Your impact begins here – choose the Auburn causes that are important to you. Whether you give to empower students through scholarships, drive groundbreaking research and life-changing outreach, or enrich the Auburn Experience, you are shaping our future.

https://aub.ie/PathoGift



PUBLICATIONS

Alpini SFO, Seeger MG, da Silveira BP, Cadena CA, Pham E, **Huber L**, Bordin AI, Wu J, Lawhon SD, Cohen ND. Combining lefamulin with rifampin provides *in vitro* synergistic antimicrobial effects against *Rhodococcus equi* isolates susceptible to macrolides and rifampin. *Am J Vet Res.* 2026 Jul 30:1-9. doi: 10.2460/ajvr.26.05.0213. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 42532109.
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https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42655705

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Church ME, Rissi DR, **Koehler JW,** Miller AD, Beck JA, Belluco S, Bitar M, Chkheidze R, Corps KN, Matiasek K, Phillips JJ, Rajan S, Stemmer-Rachamimov A, Yip S, Shih JH, Mazcko C, LeBlanc A. A comparative evaluation of canine meningioma supporting the canine patient as a naturally occurring animal model for human meningioma: a report from the NCI Comparative Brain Tumor Consortium (CBTC) meningioma pathology board. *Vet Oncol.* 2026;3(1):16. doi: 10.1186/s44356-026-00068-1. Epub 2026 Jul 28. PMID: 42524046; PMCID: PMC13407979.
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Ma X, Wijesena HR, **Zhang Y,** Miles JR, Oliver WT, Cao W, Paranjpe N, **Bartol FF,** Lents CA, Bagnell CA, **Wang X.** Lactocrine insufficiency at birth impacts uterine gene expression and development in postnatal day 14 pigs. *Biol Reprod.* 2026 Aug 22:ioag181. doi: 10.1093/biolre/ioag181. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 42631917.
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42631917/

Seeger MG, Gressler LT, **Huber L,** Alvarez-Narvaez S, Cargnelutti JF, Bordin AI, Lawhon SD, Cohen ND. Challenges for interpreting results of antimicrobial susceptibility testing for treating infections of foals with *Rhodococcus equi. Equine Vet J.* 2026 Aug 20. doi: 10.1002/evj.70312. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 42625340.
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https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42577518/

Publication information is downloaded from PubMed. We recognize that not all publications may be found on that site. Please let Liz Nowling know if your publication did not make the list, and it will be included in the next issue.

Registration Opens for 2026 Annual Conference

The 2026 Annual Conference will offer a variety of learning opportunities for Auburn alumni, faculty, students, veterinary technicians, and veterinary professionals. The event will be held **October 29-31** at **The Hotel at Auburn University & Dixon Conference Center.**

The conference will include sessions devoted to small animal, farm animal, and equine medicine, as well as continuing education in pharmacy and a technician track.

Learn more and register here:
https://www.vetmed.auburn.edu/veterinarians/ce/annual-conference

Connect with Colleagues at Tuskegee's CVM

CVM faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend the **Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine's 27th annual One Health Symposium** on **Monday, Sept. 14,** and its **14th annual Phi Zeta Research Day** on **Tuesday, Sept. 15.**

Both events will be held from **9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. in Patterson Hall Auditorium** on the Tuskegee campus. There is no cost to attend, but attendees must register in advance to receive lunch.

Learn more and register here:
https://www.vetmed.auburn.edu/veterinarians/ce/annual-conference/

IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS

Next Faculty Meeting:

Aug. 26 in GH 168 from 1-3 PM

Next Staff Meeting:

Sep. 17 in VEC 246 from 10:30-11:30 AM

A list of official holidays for Auburn employees, including schedules for 2026, is available on the University Human Resources website.

2026 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Holiday	Weekday(s) Observed	Date(s) Observed
New Year's Day	Thursday	Jan. 1, 2026
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (2026)	Monday	Jan. 19, 2026
Memorial Day	Monday	May 25, 2026
Juneteenth Day	Friday	June 19, 2026
Independence Day	Friday	July 3, 2026
Labor Day	Monday	Sept. 7, 2026
Thanksgiving	Wednesday-Friday	Nov. 25-27, 2026
Christmas*	Friday	Dec. 25, 2026

* In addition to the above dates for Christmas Day and New Year's Day, we will close campus on Friday, Dec. 18, 2026, at 4:45 p.m. and re-open on Monday, Jan. 4, 2027, at 7:45 a.m.

- Friday, Dec. 18, 2026: All offices will remain open and operating until 4:45 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 4, 2027: All offices will re-open and resume operations at 7:45 a.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Fisher, Jennifer	**21-Sep**
Gaonkar, Pankaj Prakash	**12-Sep**
Huber, Laura	**16-Sep**
Jolly, Lisa G.	**5-Sep**
McGrady, Heather M.	**19-Sep**
Michael, Alyona V.	**7-Sep**
Quintana, Theresa A.	**13-Sep**
Ventura Urbina, Diego Ernesto	**21-Sep**



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