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Surgeon appointed to lead new Vet School

The University of Adelaide has appointed orthopaedic researcher and specialist vet surgeon Professor Gail Anderson as Head of its new School of Veterinary Science.

Professor Anderson is currently Professor of Companion Animal Surgery at the University of Queensland and Hospital Director of UQ's Veterinary Teaching Hospital and Clinic.

Professor Anderson gained her Bachelor of Veterinary Science with Honours from the University of Melbourne, has a Master of Science (Comparative Orthopaedics) from Ontario Veterinary College and a PhD (Bone Cell Biology) from the University of Toronto. She holds the distinction of being the first Australian woman to attain Diplomate status from the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

A past president of the Canadian Orthopaedic Research Society, Professor Anderson has a strong research record, with interests in orthopaedics/bone remodelling, and biotechnology to improve the integration of prostheses in bone. Her research benefits both veterinary and human patients.

"Professor Anderson is an ideal appointment to head the University of Adelaide's – and the State's – first School of Veterinary Science," says the Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor James McWha.

"Her emphasis on and understanding of research will place our Vet School in good stead for the future. In order to serve the needs of South Australia and its industries, research will play a major role and will help to set our school apart."

The new Vet School, based at the University of Adelaide's Roseworthy Campus, will have its first intake of 40 students in 2008. Entry to the new school has been popular, with the University so far receiving 168 first-preference applications for the 40 places. Adelaide's Vet program, which consists of an undergraduate pre-veterinary degree and a postgraduate clinical program, will include large animal production, aquaculture, biosecurity and equine studies.

Professor Anderson says the new Vet School provides an exciting opportunity to broaden the potential for the veterinary profession in South Australia and beyond.

"My vision for veterinary medicine is somewhat different to the more traditional view," Professor Anderson says.

"Mine is a more holistic approach emphasising the relationship between veterinary and human medicine – exploring the benefits for both humans and animals. There are common disease mechanisms demanding input from both veterinarians and human health professionals. This team work is essential if we are to prevent further animal-to-human disease risks such as mad cow disease and bird flu.

"In addition, South Australia offers alternative opportunities for veterinarians, including involvement in the vital and expanding aquaculture industry," Professor Anderson says.

Professor Iain Reid will continue as Acting Head of School until Professor Anderson takes up her appointment in May 2008.

Media Contact:

Professor Iain Reid
Acting Head, School of Veterinary Science
The University of Adelaide
Work: +61 8 8303 5042
iain.reid@adelaide.edu.au

David Ellis
Media Officer
The University of Adelaide
Work: +61 8 8303 5414
Mobile: 0421 612 762
david.ellis@adelaide.edu.au