The 2008 Pearson Education UniServe Science Teaching Award has been won by a team comprising Paul McGreevy, Sally Pope, Federico Costa, Peter Thomson, Tonya Stokes and Vanessa Barrs, all from the University of Sydney. The award recognises their work in developing an on-line relational database: the Listing of Inherited Disorders in Animals (LIDA for cats). It uses non-technical descriptions written by veterinary students.

The number of inherited disorders reported in dogs and cats increases year by year and highlights the growing need for diagnostic tests and the development of genetic markers. Unfortunately, closed studbooks that forbid the introduction of ‘fresh’ bloodlines confound efforts to control inherited disorders, since avoiding one family group means that inbreeding with the remainder of the breed is made more likely. Ongoing prevalence data are essential in the fight against this inevitable trend.

Paul McGreevy has taught Animal Behaviour and Welfare in the Faculty of Veterinary Science for 12 years. He became convinced of the need for greater public awareness of inherited disorders in companion animals in the 1990s. Since 1999, he has been working with Peter Thomson, a biometrician colleague in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, to advocate online disease surveillance of Australian companion animals by harvesting current data on diagnoses from sentinel practitioners. Together they developed the Listing of Inherited Disorders in Animals (LIDA), a website that has had more than 25,000 unique visitors per month since its launch in 2004. LIDA for cats is a new venture that has implemented research-led approaches to learning and teaching and has used these to showcase high-quality student input. It is a leading example of how learning outcomes can be aligned with assessment and the students’ deliverables then developed into a learning resource.

LIDA began as a library-based activity offered to Veterinary Science undergraduate students. It exemplifies the high standard of work students can produce when thoughtfully guided and advised. Sally Pope and Federico Costa are members of the e-Learning and Web Services team within the Faculty of Veterinary Science, and they have helped to develop LIDA as a relational database that allows users to search for disorders as reported in each breed and vice versa. As part of her contribution to the project, Sally edits the students’ entries. Integration of the LIDA for cats project into a final year unit of study in the BVSc curriculum, and scrutiny of the veterinary content of student entries, has been co-ordinated by Vanessa Barrs and Tonya Stokes, clinical academics from the University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Sydney.
The project will be the subject of a keynote presentation at the 2008 UniServe Conference.

**About the Award**

The Award is a joint initiative of UniServe Science and Pearson Education Australia. The Award is designed to recognise and reward those who make an outstanding contribution to student learning outcomes through the innovative and integrated use of information and communication technologies in university science teaching. UniServe Science is the national clearinghouse for information about the use of technology in science teaching and learning. UniServe Science is sponsored by The University of Sydney.

Pearson Education Australia is Australia’s leading educational publisher and supports UniServe Science’s aim to promote the use of technology in science teaching and learning.

**About the Judges**

The judging panel comprised of Dr Shelley Yeo, Dean of Teaching and Learning, Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia, Associate Professor Gareth Denyer, School of Microbial and Molecular Biosciences at The University of Sydney; and Alexandra Hugman, Director, UniServe Science.

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