

May 30, 2021

AAFV Scholarship Committee,

My name is Allison Murawski, and I am a recent graduate from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. I was a recipient of the 2020 AAFV student scholarship. This scholarship made it possible for me to pursue my aquatic interests at externships completed during my clinical year at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, Illinois and at SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida.

My first rotation of my clinical year began at Shedd Aquarium. This rotation was a great introduction to clinics and made me more comfortable with fish anesthesia and diagnostics. We amputated the left pectoral fin of a zebra shark where I was able to practice my intramuscular injections and ultrasonography in order to monitor the heart rate. I was also able to place my first esophagostomy tube in a Western Pond Turtle. During this rotation, I researched and presented on pregnancy monitoring in cetaceans and was able to practice ultrasonography on some of the dolphins. I was also extremely fortunate to be able to witness the birth of a baby beluga! I will never forget my time at Shedd Aquarium and am so thankful for all of the learning opportunities I received there.



My last rotation of veterinary school was spent at SeaWorld Orlando. Some of my favorite procedures included aspirating a cyst on a unicorn tang, bronchoscopy and gastroscopy on a beluga, a sea lion scrotal laceration repair, oral surgery on dolphins, and so many others. I was able to practice anesthesia on many aquatic animals including fish, sea lions, seals, dolphins, sea turtles, and manatees. Overall, my favorite experiences were performing blood draws on manatees and dolphins for the first time and the opportunity to intubate a manatee! This externship was the best way to end my clinical year and I learned so much from the amazing veterinary staff at SeaWorld.



I want to thank the AAFV Scholarship Committee for giving me financial support to further my knowledge in aquatic medicine. These externships brought me closer to achieving my goal of becoming a certified aquatic veterinarian through WAVMA. Both externships were also invaluable towards my future as an aquatic veterinarian, and I will forever cherish the memories and knowledge I have gained from these institutions.

Sincerely,

Allison Murawski
University of Illinois
College of Veterinary Medicine, Class of 2021