



WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# NAVIGATING PATHWAYS FOR CAREERS IN HAI: A GUIDE FOR ADVISORS AND MENTORS



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# Introductions: Dr. Jenkins



- PhD in Counseling Psychology – HAI focus
- Embedded psychologist in a VTH since 2020
- +2 years with VMHS
- Lifelong animal lover



# Introductions: Dr. Erdman

- Ph.D – Counseling/family therapy
- Licensed mental health counselor
- Life long animal lover
- 15+ years research/involvement in human-animal interactions/interventions
- Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs – College of Education, WSU



# Learning Objectives

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- To learn about the interdisciplinary nature of the HAI field
- Identify two strategies to help guide students toward a career path in HAI





# The “why” of this presentation

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- Interdisciplinary can also mean “confusing”
- Grad school = \$\$\$\$\$
- Limits unnecessary courses/time in college
- Expands options for veterinary/animal science students
- Clarifies options for students who are not interested in vet school but want to work with animals
- Maximizes advising efforts
- Reduces barriers that complicate progress and takes up advising time
- Connects HAI faculty with student mentees more easily
- Links to employers who value HAI-applied work/research





# Historical beginnings of HAI



1859 – Florence Nightingale, nurse

“A small pet animal is often an excellent companion for the sick”

“If an individual can feed and clean the animal, they ought always be encouraged to do so”



1960s - Human animal bond – term first coined by Austrian zoologist Konrad Lorenz



Late 1960s – Boris Levinson published “Pet Oriented Child Psychotherapy” coined it “pet therapy”



1970s – Delta Foundation (Delta Society) formed, now Pet Partners;

started American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Human-Animal Bond Task Force

1990s – International Society for Anthrozoology



1990s through current – various centers developing in universities, etc., field growing rapidly





# Defining HAI

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American Veterinary Medical Association

*“The human-animal bond is a **mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals** that is influenced by behaviors that are essential to the health and well-being of both. This includes, but is not limited to, emotional, psychological and physical interactions of people, animals and the environment?”*

Animals and Society definition of human animal studies:

*“rapidly growing interdisciplinary field that examines the **complex and multidimensional relationships between humans and other animals**. Human animal studies comprises work in numerous disciplines -- social sciences (sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science) humanities (history, literary criticism, philosophy, geography), and natural sciences (ethology, veterinary medicine, animal welfare science and comparative psychology”*



# What is HAI?

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Common terms used = Confusion

Human animal interaction

Human animal bond

Human animal relationships

Human animal studies

Anthrozoology

One Health

Animal and human health and wellbeing

Biophilia





# Context of HAI

- Companion animals/pets
- Animal assisted interventions/therapy/services
- Recreational activities/animal sports
- Wildlife interactions
- Zoos
- Animals in tourism
- Agricultural/farm settings
- Animals in research



# Historical views about careers with a HAI focus

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One example

Student knows this: “I love animals and want to work with them”

- Lack of information to guide to “best fit” career results in mismatch
- One example: veterinary medicine
- The idealistic view of veterinary school is much different from the realistic view



# Idealistic view of veterinary medicine







# Reflections on what we have experienced



- A “animal lover” student with idealistic expectations may struggle academically and emotionally in a science-based program like vet med
- They may feel stuck due to financial/relocation commitments
- They may not be aware of MANY other career options in the field of HAI





# Many professions other than veterinary medicine



Psychology  
 Lab animal tech  
 Animal behavior  
 Zoos  
 Policy  
 Research  
 Forestry

### Human-Animal Interaction Careers (cont.)

**Education** Human-animal interaction education is offered in various levels. To find different programs visit the [Animals & Society Institute](#) or professional webpages such as [International Society for Applied Ethology Education Page](#).

Certificates College Post-Graduate (D.V.M., Ph.D.)

**Careers** There are a variety of career options within human-animal interactions. Every career allows for a different amount of human and animal contact, required education or training, salary, working hours, advantages, and challenges. Consider your values in work and life. Gain experience in a few areas via internships or part-time work to help you make a satisfying career choice.

Animal Agriculture Wildlife & Zoos Animal Welfare Education or Research  
 Laboratory Animal Animal Health Animal-Assisted Therapy Administration, Business, Marketing

Want to learn more? Talk to your career advisor or someone in the human-animal interaction field. Read our paper in the [Human-Animal Interaction Bulletin](#).

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Social Work  
 Wildlife rehab  
 Education  
 Assessment  
 Allied health professions  
 Agriculture

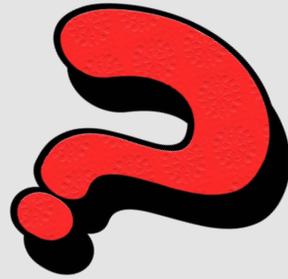




But where do I begin?



How do I start?

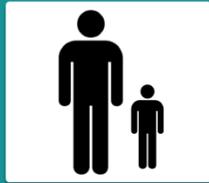


# Human-Animal Interaction Careers

Would you like to make working with animals part of your career?  
Are you unsure **what** your options are or **how** to pursue that career?  
Use this guide to identify your interests, values, & skills that lead to careers & educational opportunities.

## Humans, animals, or both?

Every career with animals also involves humans.  
Do you prefer to work *more directly with humans, animals, or both*?



Animal-assisted therapists work more with **humans**



Veterinarians work with **both**

Wildlife managers work more with **animals**

## What topics do you like?

Careers with animals can emerge from *many different topics* such as biology, psychology, or animal science. Additionally, knowledge of law, business, marketing, and more can be valuable skills to this evolving industry.



Psychology



Business



Microbiology

## What do you want?

Some careers have *physical, emotional, mental, and moral challenges*. For example, veterinarians work with animals in distress, perform euthanasia, and work long hours. Think about career challenges you may face, and which ones energize you?



Euthanasia



Sick animals



Animal testing

## How do you work best?

Certain workplaces are better suited for those who work *independently, co-operatively, creatively, or with structure*. Do you prefer to work inside vs. outside, city vs rural? Take a strengths assessment to determine the best environments for you.



Creativity



Co-operatively



Independently



# How do you like to work?

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- Alone/independently
- In a group
- Office
- In the field
- Regular hours
- Early morning/Night owl
- On call/schedule own hours
- Rural/country
- Urban/city
- With animals more/with people more



# What topics capture your interest?

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Medicine/disease

Psychology

Relationships

Legal aspects/law

Policy development

Animal rights

Teaching/training



# What are your values/beliefs/assumptions?

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Long hours/on call/early mornings/overnights  
Animal in pain  
Euthanasia  
Research with animals  
Animal rights/welfare  
Animal abuse





# What population do you want to impact?

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- Individual – children/adults
- Families
- Community
- National/Global





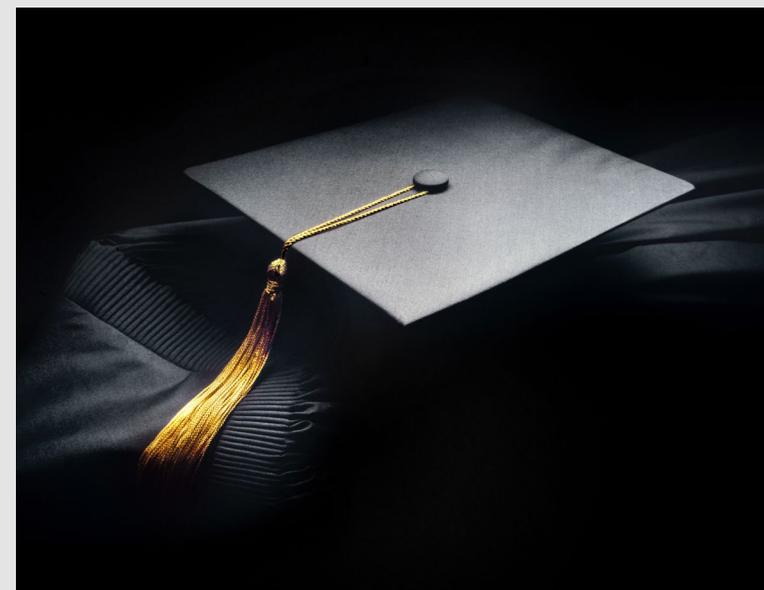
# What educational level/training credential do you want or need?

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- Bachelor's
- Graduate – Master's /Doctorate
- Stand alone certificate
- Certificate as part of a degree
- Online training
- What are your strengths/skills

Animals and Society Institute

<https://www.animalsandsociety.org/resources/resources-for-students/>





# Tips to Navigate

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Explore local relevant courses/programs

Enroll in foundational courses

Contact/interview professionals in the field

Search opportunities in research

Identify volunteer opportunities

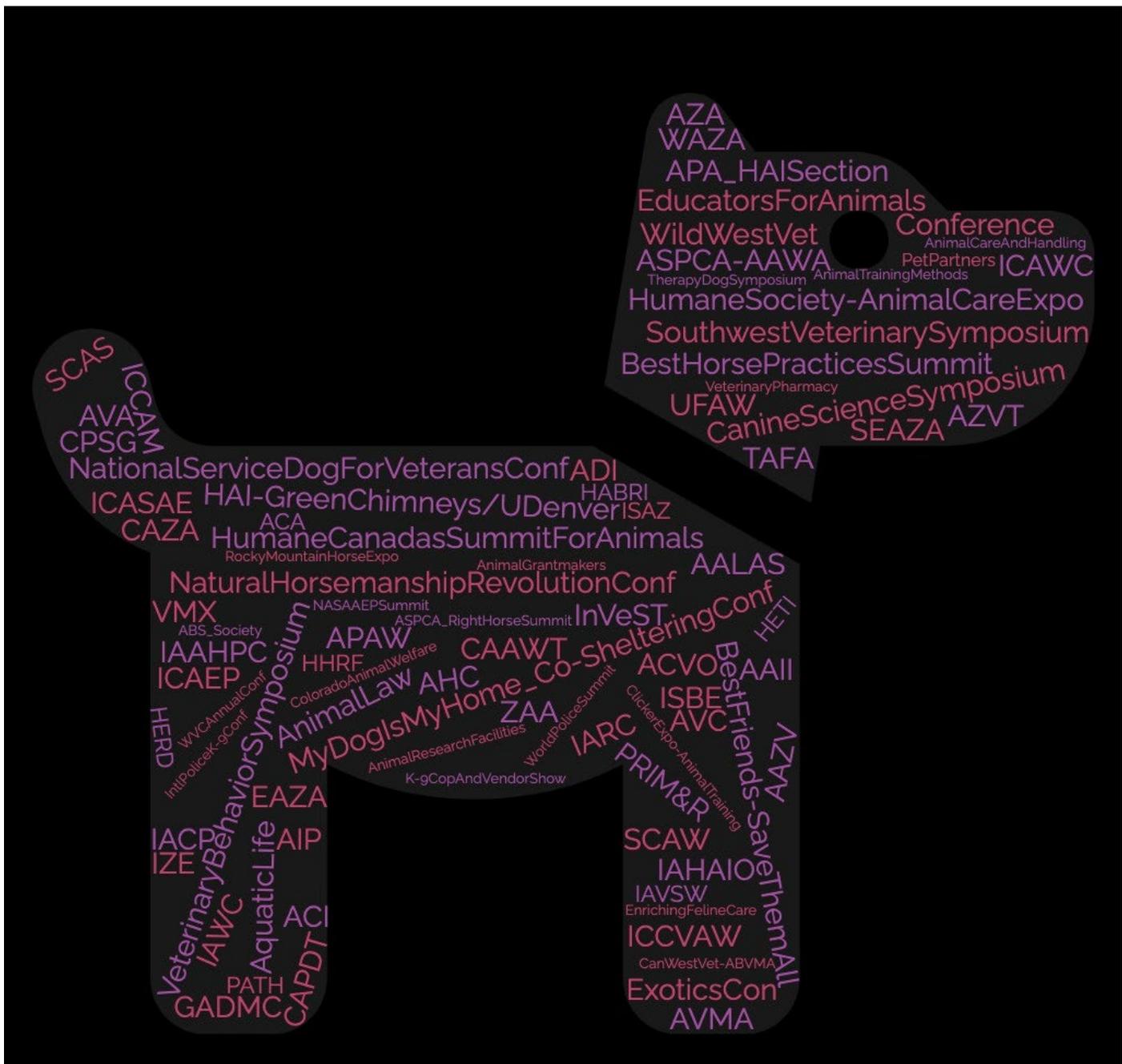
Attend conferences (i.e., ISAZ)

Seek groups/clubs that you think might be relevant

HAI section mentoring opportunities



# HAI Conferences/Summits





## Undergraduate Strategies for Getting Established in Anthrozoology/Human -Animal Interactions

 <p>Enroll in foundational courses</p>	 <p>Select a major and minor covering both humans and animals</p>	 <p>Connect with likeminded students in existing or new club</p>	 <p>Seek avenues for hosting relevant speakers (for example, involving a student group to get a speaker on campus)</p>
 <p>Explore local relevant programs or organizations nearby</p>	 <p>Identify volunteer opportunities</p>	 <p>Consider internships of interest</p>	 <p>Contact and interview faculty members doing research</p>
 <p>Contact and interview professionals working in careers that interest you</p>	 <p>Attend conferences such as ISAZ</p>	 <p>Explore shadowing/ride along opportunities</p>	 <p>Partner with a librarian to locate research literature of interest</p>



## Animal-Assisted Services (AAS)

### Animal-Assisted Treatment (AATx)

### Animal-Assisted Education (AAE)

### Animal-Assisted Support Programs (AASP)

**Note: In all types of AAS, at all times, animal welfare and ethical practice must be maintained**

#### Treatment Focus

Occupational Therapy	Psychotherapy
Physical/Physiotherapy	Psychology
Speech Therapy	Counseling
Clinical Nursing	Social Work

Note: Clinicians must operate within their scope of practice and country's regulations

**Distinction:**

- Treatment goals are defined, outcomes are measured & documented
- Provider is a licensed/degreed/credentialed health or human service provider who might handle the animal or work with a handler
- Animal is prepared, evaluated, trained, and/or registered

#### Academic Focus

**Distinction:**

- Academic goals are defined, outcomes are measured & documented
- Provider is a licensed/degreed educator who might handle the animal or work with a handler
- Animal is prepared, trained and/or registered

#### Socio-emotional learning focus

- Animal-Assisted Psychoeducation
- Humane Education
- Farm/Barn Care Programs
- Therapeutic Riding
- Prison-Based Training Programs
- Equine-Assisted/Facilitated Learning

**Distinction:**

- Psychoeducational & personal development goals are defined, outcomes are measured & documented
- Provider is a licensed/degreed educator, mental health provider or a paraprofessional knowledgeable about socio-emotional learning and the facilitation of AAE and animal behavior who might handle the animal or work with a handler
- Animal is prepared, evaluated, trained, and/or registered

#### Support Focus: Formerly known as animal assisted activities

Visitation Programs  
(eg airport, medical office, hospital, clergy, community visits, dogs on campus, crisis support)

Animal-Assisted Crisis Intervention, Emotional First-Aid Support Focus

Horsemanship services for support needs (rehab, improving physical functioning, eg vaulting)

Reading programs (support focus) Without a licensed/degreed provider

Community Social Work (Support Focus); Coaching (social skills)

Riding for the Disabled (UK/Australia) Support focus

Courthouse Dogs / Crisis Intervention (Support Focus)

**Distinction:**

- Benefits are identified but not defined, outcomes are not measured or documented
- Provider is a volunteer or paraprofessional trained in AASP who is typically also the handler
- Animal is prepared, evaluated, trained and/or registered

# Resources and Contacts

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Thank you for your time today !

Good luck in your future endeavors!



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