

April 17, 2026

VET TECH FRIDAYS

Knowledge, News, and Updates



Meet the Faculty

Katy Schuster, AAS, RVT

Katy Schuster brings a strong clinical background and a genuine passion for teaching to her role as an instructor at VTI. She began her career in general practice, where she spent five years building a solid foundation in patient care. From there, she transitioned into specialty medicine, gaining experience in internal medicine, anesthesia, and surgery at local specialty hospitals.

Now stepping into the classroom, Katy describes teaching as her newest adventure in the veterinary field. She is grateful for the opportunity to support and guide future veterinary technicians as they develop their skills and confidence.

Katy earned her Associate of Applied Science degree from Purdue University and is also a certified Master Gardener. Her love for learning and growth extends beyond the clinic and into her personal life as well. When she is not teaching, Katy enjoys spending time with her plants and gardening, reading, visiting farmer's markets, and crocheting. Her home is full of personality thanks to her pets, including Groot, her French Bulldog, her cats Patrick and Mr. Warble, and a lively flock of 15 chickens.

Her favorite part of being a veterinary technician is seeing sick patients recover and go on to live their best lives. She also enjoys hands-on procedures, continuously learning new skills, and now, helping students discover their own passion for the field.

Katy shares this advice for students: the training can be challenging, but it is worth it. Stay committed, keep pushing forward, and remember that you are working toward a truly rewarding career.



Student of the Week

Caitlin Throop

Caitlin Throop is the kind of student who leaves an impression on everyone she meets. If there were a way to nominate someone more than once, Caitlin would easily earn that recognition again and again.

She is known for consistently advocating for her patients, always keeping their well-being at the center of everything she does. Her compassion and dedication shine through in both her work and her interactions with others.



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Caitlin is kind, hardworking, and brings a great sense of humor to her cohort, helping to lift those around her even during challenging moments. She approaches every situation with thoughtfulness and professionalism, showing a strong sense of responsibility and care.

In addition to her own academic success, Caitlin is an exceptional tutor. Students often seek her out specifically, which speaks volumes about her ability to connect with others and explain material in a way that truly helps it click. She genuinely cares about her peers and is deeply invested in their success, always willing to take the time to support and encourage them.

Described as conscientious and diplomatic, Caitlin is someone her peers can rely on. She is always willing to step in to help and continues to persevere through difficult situations with a positive attitude and determination.

Caitlin truly embodies the qualities of an exceptional veterinary technician in the making, and we are proud to recognize her as our Student of the Week. Congratulations, Cait!

The Paws Behind the Faces

Teacher and Faculty Pets: Mrs. Norton and Figaro



Meet Figaro, Mrs. Norton's beloved "Heart cat." Figaro was by her side for an incredible 14 years, from the time he was just a tiny kitten at 6 to 8 weeks old. Over the years, he was there through some of life's biggest milestones, including tech school, her first job as a veterinary technician, getting married, and starting a family.



He truly grew up alongside her, making him much more than just a pet. Figaro had a personality that was impossible not to love. He enjoyed playing with his favorite little toys, cuddling whenever he could, and had a very special weakness for ice cream. He never met a stranger and had a way of making everyone feel welcome.

After 14 long and love-filled years, passed, but the memories he created

Some pets come into our lives and Figaro, leave a permanent place



Figaro eventually became sick and continue to mean everything.

leave paw prints. Others, like in our hearts.

Student Voices

Mia Myers
07DV25

I chose veterinary medicine as my career because of my deep passion for animals and my strong concern for their health and well-being. From a young age, I felt a natural connection to animals and wanted to be someone who could help them when they are sick or injured. This passion grew over time as I learned more about how important proper care and medical attention are to an animal's quality of life. I am driven by the desire to advocate for animals who cannot speak for themselves and to ensure they receive the compassion and treatment they deserve.



Veterinary medicine allows me to combine my love for animals with my interest in science and medicine, creating a path that is both meaningful. I am also inspired by the opportunity to educate pet owners about proper care and preventative health, helping animals live longer, and healthier lives. Even though, the field can be challenging and emotionally demanding, I am committed to overcoming those difficulties because of the impact I can make. Ultimately, I chose this path because I want to make a meaningful difference in the lives of animals and the people who care about them, while continuing to grow and learn throughout my career.



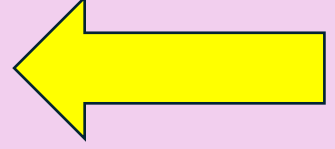
GUESS WHO? BEFORE THE SCRUBS

Our instructors are taking you back in time...

Below are baby and childhood photos of your VTI team. Can you figure out who is who?



[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR GUESSES](#)



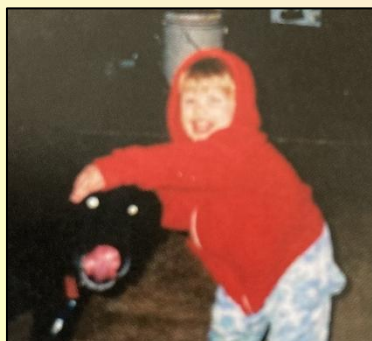
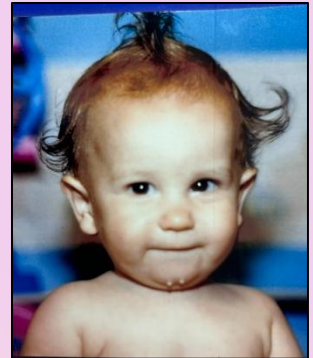
How it works:

Submit your guesses by Thursday, 4/23

Everyone with the highest number of correct answers will be entered into a drawing

Our winner(s) will receive a small prize

Answers will be revealed in the 5/7/26 Newsletter (after spring break)



Faculty Superlatives
We Asked and You Answered

Most likely to survive the
zombie apocalypse

Ms. Lewis

Most likely to have a zoo in their
backyard

Mrs. Hix

Most likely to give you a hug
on a rough day

Mrs. Stout

Most likely to rescue every
animal they meet

Mrs. Dixon

Most likely to talk to animals
like they're people

Mrs. Crocker

Most likely to give extra credit

Mrs. Dixon

Most likely to lock themselves
out of their car

Mr. Williams

Most likely to accidentally go
viral on social media

Mr. Williams

Most intimidating at first...but
secretly a softie

Ms. Lewis

Most likely to win the lottery
and not tell anyone

Mrs. Hix and Ms. Lewis

Most likely to be "in the zone"
and not notice you waving at
them

Ms. Lewis

Most likely to make a joke and
laugh at themselves

Ms. Lewis

Who has the cutest animals?

Mrs. Dixon

Who is the best dressed?

Mrs. Schuster

Most likely to befriend the
"spicy" cat

Mrs. Stout

Thank you to all who participated!

SCNAVTA

Next Meeting: Wednesday, 5/13 @ 3:30 PM

What is SCNAVTA?

SCNAVTA is the student chapter of NAVTA (National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America).

- Focuses on building leadership skills
- Promotes the veterinary technician profession through community service and fundraising
 - Helps students stay connected to what is happening in the field



Why it matters

- Helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience
 - Gives you experiences and stories to talk about in interviews
 - Helps you build connections that can lead to externships and jobs
- Shows employers you are motivated, involved, and passionate about the field
 - Keeps you engaged and connected to your “why” throughout the program
- Allows you to start being part of the veterinary technician profession before you even graduate

What do we do?

In the past, the group has:

- Gone to Penn & Beech Candle Co. to make candles for fun
- Taken a behind-the-scenes tour of the hospital at the Indianapolis Zoo
- Hosted bake sales and soda bar sales to raise money for fun outings
 - And more!

Why should you join?

- It's a great opportunity to get involved
- Meet other students with similar interests
- Stay informed during school and after graduation
- Gain real experiences you can talk about in interviews
 - Build connections in the field
 - Strengthen your resume
 - Earn a cord for graduation

Good to know

- **Free to join**
- **ALL are welcome!**

Photos Around Campus

Mrs. Hix happily cuddles with her favorite snake, Mrs. Dixon's ball python, Grindylow, also known as "G."

G made a special visit to campus during Exotics class as part of reptile week, helping demonstrate the unique anatomy of snakes. He also served as an ambassador for his species, showing students just how calm and gentle they can be.



Fun Fact #1: Live prey feeding poses significant risk in captivity.

Feeding live rodents is strongly discouraged, as rats and mice can bite, scratch, or seriously injure a snake. In some cases, unattended prey has caused severe wounds or even death. For this reason, pre-killed or frozen-thawed prey is considered the safest and most humane standard in captive care.

Fun Fact #2: Ball pythons exhibit "balling" as an anti-predator behavior.

Rather than striking, they coil tightly with the head protected at the center, reducing vulnerability to predation.



A successful visit to Ashley's Snack Spot for their weekly snack was embarked upon by 07DV25 students Mariana Williams, Edith Morales-Hernandez, and Asia Gibson-Thomas.



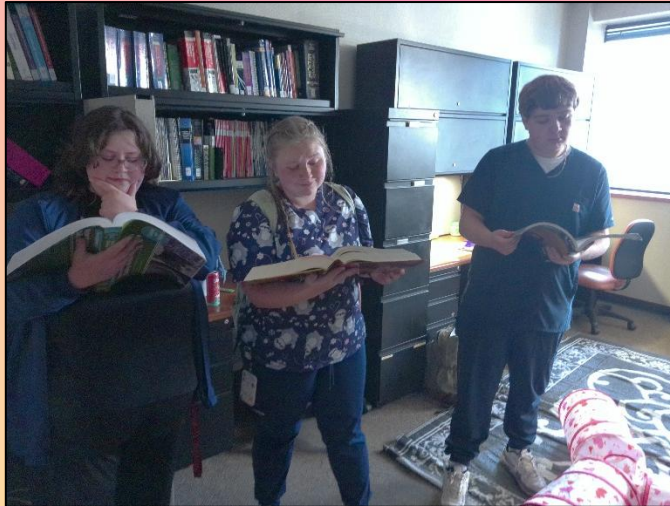
11DV25 students Ava Scheerer and Sarah Somerville enjoyed a fun playdate together in the park with their adorable pups Avi and Ollie!

Photos Around Campus

03DV26 students Lucy Shaub, Alyza Sutton-Kendall, Wade Short, 07DV25 student Mia Myers, and 03DV25 student Lexi Lloyd get ready to start studying together outside in the fresh air!



Catching up in the parking lot together during a break from class are 07DV25 students Emily Dean, Luanne Gilliam, and Avery Hirt.



Reading or posing for a picture? You decide! 😊

Pictured left in a Recharge Room: 07DV25 students James Ball, Erica Alvarado, and Izic Clark



Pictured right in the library: 11DV25 students Chloe Trick, Jazmyne Wallace, and Jacee Nugent

In the breezeway... Mrs. Dixon, Mrs. Stout, and a few excited students who are ready for their last classes of the day before the weekend!



Underrated Animals

Blanket Octopus: Beauty, Defense, and Extreme Adaptation



If you saw this drifting through the ocean, you might think it was a piece of glowing fabric... until it moved.

The blanket octopus is one of the most bizarre and visually stunning animals in the sea. Females trail long, flowing webs between their arms that shimmer with blues, purples, and silvers, creating a cape-like effect as they move through the water. It's less "octopus" and more something out of a sci-fi movie, and the deeper you look into this species, the stranger it gets.

Blanket octopuses are found in tropical and subtropical oceans around the world, including the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. Unlike many octopus species that stay close to reefs or the seafloor, they live in the open ocean, drifting and swimming through midwater. This pelagic lifestyle makes them incredibly difficult to study, which is why much of what we know about them is still developing. Most people will never encounter one, which only adds to their mystery.

Their life cycle is just as unusual as their appearance. The size difference between males and females is extreme, with females reaching up to about 6 feet long while males are only about an inch. This makes them one of the most dramatic examples of sexual dimorphism in the animal kingdom. The male's entire role is centered around reproduction. He uses a specialized arm called a hectocotylus to transfer sperm to the female, and that arm actually detaches during the process. After mating, the male typically dies. The female then carries and protects her fertilized eggs until they are ready to hatch. Once the young emerge, they are immediately on their own in the open ocean, with no parental care.

Despite their delicate, almost elegant appearance, blanket octopuses are incredibly resourceful when it comes to survival. When threatened, the female spreads her large, webbed "blanket" to make herself appear bigger and more intimidating. She can even tear off sections of the webbing to distract predators while she escapes. Even more surprising, blanket octopuses have been observed interacting with Portuguese man o' war jellyfish in a way that seems almost impossible. They are immune to the venom and will rip off the jellyfish's stinging tentacles, using them as weapons for both defense and hunting. It is one of the few known examples of an animal repurposing another species' defense system for its own use.

Because they are rarely observed, each documented sighting of blanket octopuses has helped scientists better understand extreme differences between males and females, unique reproductive strategies, and survival adaptations in the open ocean. Their ability to handle venomous tentacles has also sparked interest in how certain animals develop resistance to toxins, which has broader implications for scientific research.

The blanket octopus is a perfect example of how strange and incredible life in the ocean can be. It may not be well-known, but once you learn about it, it is nearly impossible to forget.

Cool Facts About the Blanket Octopus

- Females can be up to 10,000 times larger than males
- Their "blanket" is used to startle predators and create a distraction
- They can weaponize jellyfish tentacles for defense
- Males have a specialized arm used for reproduction that detaches



FOR THE KIDS (FTK) - ZOO CREW -

CONCESSIONS @ INDIANAPOLIS ZOO

**WORK
WHEN YOU WANT!**

Students working FTK
CONCESSIONS -
Everyone loves it!

**NO LONG-TERM
COMMITMENT!**

- WHAT THIS IS: -



Serve Burgers & Pretzels



Scoop Ice Cream & Dippin' Dots

Work Fun Concession Stands

- MINIMUM PROGRAM DONATION:
\$75/DAY

- WHY PEOPLE LOVE IT:

- ✓ Pick Events YOU Want
- ✓ Evenings & Weekends
- ✓ Super Flexible Schedule!



THE VIBE:

- ✓ Fun & Fast!
- ✓

EASY MONEY!

SCAN HERE TO
SIGN UP!



Forthekidsinc5@gmail.com

FortheKidsinc5@gmail.com

INDIANAPOLIS 500!!!

CONCESSIONS CREW NEEDED!

Fast Cars. Fast Money. Big Impact!



LOOKING FOR **50** VOLUNTEERS!


Average program support
~\$250 per volunteer!


POUR BEER &
SERVE NACHOS!



 **SHIFT: 5AM - 5PM** • SUNDAY, MAY 24TH • INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

- SERVE FOOD & DRINKS • Fuel the Fans
- Fuel the Fans • Have a Blast!

 **Secure the Bag!**
Pour Beer. Serve Nachos.
Watch Races!



SCAN TO SIGN UP!
* Limited spots available!

SIGN UP NOW!

No Experience Necessary • Just Bring the Energy!

NEWSLETTER PHOTO SUBMISSION

We are looking to include more student life photos in our weekly newsletter, and we would love your help.

How to Participate:

→ Please make sure you receive permission from all students in the photo before submitting it.

→ Please include the names of the students in the picture if you can, but if not, I can figure them out.

→ You can email photos to me at any time at amiller@vettechinstitute.edu



Important reminder:

Photos must NOT include any Vet Tech Institute animals. This is very important for our animal partnership policies.

Good photo ideas:

- Studying with classmates
- Hanging out in the student lounge
- Working on homework together
- Housing/apartment life
- Campus events
- Group selfies with classmates
- Fun moments between classes



VTI STUDENT VOICES

We are excited to introduce a new section in our newsletter featuring YOU!

Students are invited to submit:

A short article (200-400 words)

An optional photo of yourself

Not sure what to write about? Here are some ideas:

A reflection about your experience

Advice for other students

Why you chose veterinary technology

A challenge you've overcome in the program

What has surprised you most so far

A meaningful moment in kennel or class

Study tips or time management strategies

What motivates you to keep going on tough days

Your goals after graduation

What being part of VTI means to you

If selected, your submission will be featured in the newsletter,
and you will receive a small thank-you gift as a token of appreciation.

Submit your entry by emailing Ashley Miller at amiller@vettechinstitute.edu.

Please include your name and cohort with your submission.

All submissions should be respectful, appropriate, and school-related.

Please note that submissions may be lightly edited for clarity, length, and professionalism.

No need to be a "perfect writer" – we just want to hear your voice and your experience.

Being featured is also a great addition to your resume or professional portfolio.

Let your voice be heard! We can't wait to hear your story.

