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PSC vet tech grads achieve 100 percent pass rate on national competency exam

National average for passing rate is 70 percent

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They studied together. They struggled together. And when it was time for 12 Pensacola State College veterinary technician students to take a national competency exam, they all passed together.

It’s the first 100 percent passing rate for a class from the PSC Veterinary Technology Program since 2013, when all nine students passed the 150-question Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE).

The exam is used by most states and agencies to evaluate competency of entry-level veterinary technicians. The passing rate for PSC students taking the exam over the previous three years was 88 percent. The national average for passing the VTNE over the same three-year period was 70.31 percent.

Sarah Meyer-Paterson, Veterinary Technology Program director, credited the program faculty – and students – for the perfect passing rate.

“It’s due to an excellent, dedicated faculty,’’ she said, “and the students themselves. They were a great cohort ─ they studied together outside of class and really supported each other.”

Gena Medley, a certified veterinary technician (CVT), was one of the 12 who passed the exam. She took her VTNE in July in Mobile, Alabama, which is the closest testing site for the exam. Some students took the exam in the fall.

“We were all super close,’’ said Medley, a program graduate and CVT who works at the Animal Hospital of Tiger Point. “If one person was struggling, we would all rally around for support. We all wanted to be right there on the same page.”

Classmate Allyson Griego said her instructors made the difference for the class.

“Without the wonderful teachers I had, I would have not passed the VTNE,’’ said Griego, a CVT at the Santa Rosa County Animal Shelter. “They definitely take a very hands-on approach to teach us skills that we’re able to retain long term. Our teachers spent countless hours lecturing, preparing labs and providing guest speakers to make sure we were knowledgeable nurses when we graduated.”

While some Veterinary Technology Program graduates work locally, many have relocated to some of the top veterinary clinics and hospitals in the country.

Christina Zaccardi, a 2019 graduate, is now a CVT at the Auburn University Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

“She’s on the clinical staff there,’’ Meyer-Paterson said of her former student. “We have a lot of students who have found work across the country. I think we help to broaden their horizons by showing them all the options for employment. I think when they start the program, they don’t know what their options are. We take them to vet schools for tours, conferences that have employment and internship opportunities. We try to expose them to as much as possible.”

It’s not just recent graduates finding success.

Of the nine students who passed the VTNE in 2013, two went on to work in the University of Florida Animal Care Services. Since 2013, PSC Veterinary Technician graduates have found positions at noted facilities such as the Texas A&M University Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, Boren Veterinary Medical Hospital ─ Oklahoma State University as well as facilities in Oregon, Virginia, Mississippi and other states.

For more information on PSC’s Veterinary Technology Program, email healthprograms@pensacolastate.edu or visit [www.pensacolastate.edu/academic-programs/vet-as/](http://www.pensacolastate.edu/academic-programs/vet-as/).

PHOTO: Christina Zaccardi, a 2019 graduate, is now a certified veterinary technician at the Auburn University Veterinary Teaching Hospital. She is pictured with her dog Doc.

PHOTO: Sarah Myer-Paterson, PSC Veterinary Technology Program director.