

## From the clinic to the lab

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*Dr. Long shares how his training in emergency medicine made him a better veterinarian and offers advice to those considering a career in laboratory animal medicine.*

**You first became interested in laboratory animal science after taking a course with your mentor Dr. Bradford Goodwin at Ross University. Tell us more about how this course inspired you.**

I took a course with Dr. Goodwin, a charismatic professor, during my fifth semester of veterinary school at Ross University. He began his first lecture by telling the class about his career and the opportunities available in the fields of laboratory animal and comparative medicines. I thought, 'Wow, I never even knew these fields existed!' Having spent a semester in dental and podiatry school before making the switch to veterinary medicine, I always had a keen interest in human translational research; I saw laboratory animal medicine as an opportunity to combine my passion for working with animals with my interests in human medicine.

**You started your veterinary career in private practice and worked in small animal emergency medicine. How has this experience contributed to your success as a lab animal veterinarian?**

In emergency medicine, you can either 'sink or swim' very quickly. While working overnight shifts, you are generally the only doctor at the clinic and all the decisions and

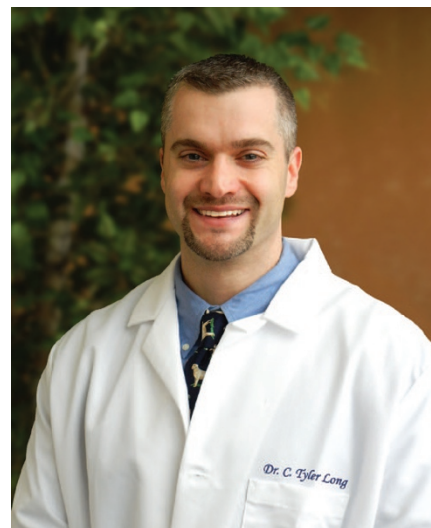
responsibilities fall on your shoulders. It's up to you to direct staff efficiently, communicate plans and expectations with the clients and ensure that your patients are provided with the best possible care while in the hospital. Mistakes are sometimes made, but you learn from them quickly. These skills make you a better emergency clinician as well as laboratory animal veterinarian; hopefully one day I can possess more of them!

**What aspects of your job as Clinical Veterinarian at North American Science Associates do you find the most challenging? What aspects do you enjoy the most?**

What makes my job so challenging (and exciting) is devising animal models that have never been used before and refining current models in order to benefit the welfare of the animals. But the best part of my job is the variety of people I work with on a daily basis, from the animal care staff within our vivarium to the sponsors who come to us from all over the globe. If you keep an open mind, something can be learned from each and every person you meet that will serve you throughout your career and constantly make you a better veterinarian.

**Based on your experiences, what advice would you give to someone thinking of switching to a career in laboratory animal science?**

The field of veterinary medicine is extremely broad in regard to career opportunities, and laboratory animal science is an area that



provides veterinarians and technicians with a vast array of career choices. One should not assume that a career in laboratory animal science equates to working in a laboratory with mice. There are positions available where one can focus primarily on research (comparative or veterinary), clinical practice or regulatory affairs, or one can serve many different roles all at one institution. I never imagined that as a laboratory animal veterinarian I would be doing twice as much surgery as I did when I was in small animal practice!

**Is there anything else you would like to share with *Lab Animal* readers?**

One area of laboratory animal science that anyone can participate in is the publication and presentation of their work in journals and at local and national meetings. Whether it is original research, a novel technique for restraining rodents or a 'once in a lifetime' case study, disseminating this information to the lab animal community makes it stronger and more able to provide the best in animal care.