



Award-winning Simulation Veterinary Clinic

Unitec celebrates the redesign and equipment upgrade of its award-winning Simulation Veterinary Clinic.

The clinic, which was the first of its kind when it originally opened in 2009, now has brand-new premises designed to help with student learning. In 2010 the Department of Natural Sciences was awarded the three Rs award from The National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC) for the replacement, reduction and refinement of the use of animals in teaching.

Since then it emerged that the Veterinary Simulation Clinic not just reduces the angst and stress of animals used for teaching but also for students. The previous facilities were well used and appreciated by students that we gladly took the opportunity to move and upgrade the clinic when this was offered early in 2013. We were fortunate that the president of the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association, Julie Hutt, was able to officially open the facilities with a great speech about the past, present and future of the veterinary nursing profession.

The new facility has more of a 'clinical feel' to it which helps to bridge the gap between

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simulation and real world experience in the Unitec Veterinary Hospital and the Veterinary Specialist Group. The simulation clinic is not designed to replace the experience students' gain in an actual clinic; it's more about easing students into the real life environment. We are aware that you can only simulate so much and then when you practice the first time on a real animal, things can be quite different however they are certainly not that stressful when you are comfortable handling the simulation equipment.

At the beginning of the students first year of study, very basic skills like 'how to set up a syringe in a sterile manner' can be practiced in a safe environment but towards the end of the second year, the student experience in the clinic can also be set up to practice surgery and anaesthesia set up or to run a wide variety of diagnostic procedures.

One thing we have not utilized as much as we would like is the use of the reception area. In the future we are planning to use this set up to better prepare students for the communication skills required for working on the front desk. This area has been addressed by external clinic placements as well as our on-site hospital as an area where our students could improve.

The Unitec Diploma in Veterinary Nursing is now staffed with three veterinarians (Dr's Rebecca Ladyman, Jodi Salinsky and I) and two veterinary nurses (Angela Gussey, Dip VN and Laura Harvey Dip VN). With the



new support on board we are looking forward to using these new facilities as much as possible and supporting the industry with well educated, work ready graduates.

*Top: K9 Gerry, a simulation patient
Above: Sabina Darke, Angela Gussey
and Laura Harvey*