Tracey ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sCVZrHGKX1_W4Se3olkoQ52h1-XNr-r9kN2Bpicdt2qPlpriYtND7hMcLr5JpWlkLCf3HHslUu6V4rRcxmjAApdx-x0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.8)):

Hello, and welcome to NC State's Audio Abstract. I'm your host Tracey Peake. Students interested in pursuing a career in veterinary medicine, have a unique resource here, VetPAC, the Veterinary Professions Advising Center. VetPAC is a pre-veterinary advising program that provides NC State undergraduates with guidance, resources, and experiences to create competitive DVM applicants. Those experiences include hands-on opportunities with both domestic and wild animals. We're speaking today with Shweta Trivedi, VetPAC program director about the program, the students, and the most memorable experiences she's had while working with aspiring veterinarians. Welcome Shweta. How are you today?

Shweta ([00:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TYX33TuiO1SEQkvK9U8XmMyMJzW7RcfTrGg587UJh8xC_rwEyxEzEL_4s6ZnVGotvtrVAIhYDDD2qyQZx7HMIRWXUBQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=50.08)):

Good morning, Tracey. I'm doing fantastic. Thank you for having me over.

Tracey ([00:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bOsLfASHl5W4pIbN_UvFB5U5wyK8OD0w4QXi3iIgFVWLryU8SEfKrL2CK16WV9EPo8eHPfdqtPZNFUJo4cQlVSuOxr4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=54.77)):

Well I'm very excited that you're here today, because I think VetPAC is a really cool resource and I think folks would like to know a lot more about it. So let's get started with why and when did you start the VetPAC program? Did you know of similar programs at other universities? Was there an inspiration behind this?

Shweta ([01:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FSFbJlmo-z6RpgdmkenqybcNhItPNWa-Kk9ORVY7W-HGPCV8Wvmw9aAWEeBGdUo2kUrs3hfb1cjJvIh6qJS9uUxH-oM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=75.69)):

That's an excellent question. So about 12 years ago, when I was hired into the position of a teaching assistant professor in the Department of Animal Science at the College of Ag and Life Science, it was actually an expectation that as a part of teaching anatomy and physiology which were the two core courses for animal science undergraduates, I was required to start a pre-veterinary advising center. So I cannot take credit for developing it as an evolutionary idea per se, but it was the leaders and the administration that had already outlined a need for having an in-house, pre-veterinary advising center. And then there's also an online presence, which is the website and the website is super dynamic. So yeah, there are two presence that VetPAC, maintains a physical one in Riddick Hall, as well as an online one in the form of the website.

Tracey ([03:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cEeKdNuu2eLYJQ7UUJF96KCBFyfQxLnjnwxuWSSe5f7JBG6LWUziDhnwGLjdLcXqWvehiOeLghtp5kt2Qbyy1GmXPMo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=197.54)):

Okay. So I know that school admission is extremely competitive because there aren't that many veterinary schools in the US. And so, I also know that there are a lot of folks who are interested in veterinary medicine. How many students do you work with in a particular year and what are they looking for? How does VetPAC maybe give them an edge over some other applicants in terms of, I don't know, desirability?

Shweta ([03:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ez054xCwTCAY5KEqE-5diDMC-v2eMgG8yxqRt0-QloptQb5TtT3doQYBYJaUFnBaXFF49hULJIPWqgfvHt4h0T17R4E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=232.3)):

Sure. So there is no other pre-vet advising center that's separate from pre-health advising center at any other university, so VetPAC is unique in and of itself by being a separate entity and being housed within a college. I typically have about 700 to 750 students enrolled in VetPAC that are in different ages and stages. They are freshmen through seniors. We have alumni that are taking a gap year or several gap years, and then we have the non-degree seeking students, which are classified as NDS.

Shweta ([04:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GiFvALRmNdSFAHoBoua9jjjecSrv3a4E5cEiyLvATf_TljFh0KETbfY2nziD4e7BBnKuqFc4X7hWhOZG0J5PlIgFEXo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=285.6)):

And success rate wise, we have at least at our vet school, at the College of Veterinary Medicine at NC State, we do have the highest number of applicants from our program, and therefore, a big chunk of the incoming class is our students. So we have, a range is what I give you, each year we have about 35 to 40% of the incoming class are students that have accessed VetPAC resources of some sort, either internships, or one-on-one advising, or my study abroads, or they've gotten to conferences like North Carolina Veterinary Conference, or the American Pre-Vet Medical Association Conference.

So it's nice to see that many students are getting in here and we typically place anywhere from 12 to 20 each year in out-of-state schools. And then I say out of state, some of them are in United Kingdom. Some of them are within the continental US, and there are a few that have gone to Australia and New Zealand as well.

Tracey ([06:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lzTV2ejOMErPjBitj9YdfSvst8n239nDhd3ypUrE6660WwevL0PgHv7vh2a7d0OPtsgAQUR2YvQb37a4yrNzMs1w1bs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=416.17)):

Wow. And that brings me sort of into the next question, which is one of the most exciting things that I noticed was the availability of hands-on experiences. And you've taken people as far as South Africa to work with animals and wildlife preserves, as well as shadowing your local veterinarian to see what it's like to deal with cats, dogs. Tell me a little bit more about some of the study abroad and shadowing and hands-on opportunities that these students get. What will they be doing or what could they do or experience?

Shweta ([07:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=R5H1CD64JF4P4w3a83E4ZxhtdCtIfGIDLQy-zwFu980yHj6-nJJ0LQdieb8VJykMp2ysqaPtd9g4PGI1hGnHkmZsuXQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=452.55)):

Absolutely. When I was developing the idea of what will be VetPAC and what would I want to offer my students? One of the biggest things was I want them to avail a lot of hands-on opportunities, either directly through the programs that we would have in partnerships with different organizations and institutions, or with local veterinarians and veterinarians beyond.

Shweta ([08:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=drT1VWmjSH5U_JnFnbeT3d2YOGhm7mr6qgx96q_t0YxL0z3gEJiz5Af7yAU4YyfMB5E4P-snl7ermW81tTy4q4cksLw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=486.53)):

So some of the first few internships that I developed were actually with two very important and unique organizations that are local. One was the Wake County Animal Center, which is the animal shelter for Wade County, where our veterinary students already go for their fourth year rotations and getting community outreach experience. That's where we started off. And that shelter medicine experience is unique because it is not your regular clinic or a hospital where students scan just work with clients.

And then the second one was with one of our own alumni, Dr. Dan Dombrowski. He and I decided that we could mentor students together for a Museum Medicine internship. And he had just become the chief veterinarian at the museum downtown, in the Museum of Life Sciences. And we have placed at least 80 to 90% of shelter medicine and museum medicine interns into vet schools, so these are very highly successful ones.

Shweta ([10:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pD6_a71SJm1CHZgTEoQzdimVNLgtyUzzf8ChfgaicHa7ACjTuSVoc5ru9faxwUDswhbt8RGxo_84KKzB7xMsjURHiFg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=604.59)):

The other ones that you touched upon and the super exciting one for the students are certainly international study abroad experiences So in early 2010, 2011, I developed a wildlife conservation course in India where I'm originally from. And I had great connections at the Wildlife Institute of India where the department head of wildlife health management was very well-known to me and a friend and students ended up gaining hands-on experiences with tigers. So we radio collared tigers and they had been heavily poached and they had gone completely missing from one of the national parks in India.

Students were able to play a real tiger sound to call out a female. It was a mating sound. It was a male mating sound call that was a recording. And the female came out and she had to be radio-collared. So she was darted by the Indian veterinarian, who's the only legally allowed veterinarian to dart the tiger in India. And once they had darted, the students and I, and the veterinarians from Wildlife Institute of India could actually go and cut out the old radio collar and then put on the new one, which would typically work for about two to three years easily and transmit the location of that specific tiger, that had been relocated into the park where all had been poached.

Shweta ([12:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gitIcOaa3jB4Jbw3s3KmJW91DUD9Wun62BRdHiBm8W3ZmBmA6CctJw4UVrNvUdqFAtXbjTev_C3Kq2ymkc1bRx9iK2U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=763.25)):

So students got to see that as humans, as veterinarians, what a tremendous role we can play in conserving wildlife in different parts of the world. So after five years I developed a South Africa one, and now my students get to work with rhinos. We work with giraffes, we work with zebras. We work with unique antelopes and deers. We work with wild dogs. We work with cheetahs and these are on different game reserves in the greater Kruger region.

Shweta ([13:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=j-nMfu0OCz0dDASEvi94gJp3gbkrsk8xfEXS8jCsgcs8y8J7vtFPNCHq9zpxVeZYuoA86pT8KP2RF3PxyO-h6MCxFCQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=821.59)):

So now rhinos are definitely being heavily poached and the rhino horn, which is essentially a tuft of hair, if you will, is sold very heavily in the black market for wildlife trade, because it's considered to be aphrodisiac just like tiger bones are. We work with the south African wildlife veterinarians with rhino management and preventing poaching. So Dr. Christian Boshav, he goes by Bossi, essentially darts these rhinos and our students then can do TPR, which is temperature, pulse, respiration. And then what we also do is as a part of management, if their horn has to be kind of removed a little bit, we go ahead and cut it down.

Shweta ([14:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=T-rhRYhiSbf4wvW6ADCKZE-Nv1Se-SZ_HQLZp002IbW6cgPvixdLLKCo294Dzo7sAq0C3-STCTNpq4BE-b4vzrCCYlg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=897.17)):

And again, there's a certain length that we go down, we kind of go halfway down, so that we are not really getting into the blood supply of that horn and students get to see that. But we also collect hair. We collect the shavings of the rhino horn too, because they are specific to each rhino, and we have a DNA bank in which this hair sample goes. But we have done multiple different activities in South Africa. We have the translocation, where animals have to be removed from one reserve to the other reserve. Giraffes can be very tricky. They have long legs and they behave differently under anesthesia. And one kick can kill. Bossi tells all the students where to exactly stand and keep very good eyes on the animal as it's coming down, as well as, good listening ears.

Shweta ([16:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FW43OYTZtUYfr1a8_7B3oFUWX0JircOECUClGCI8iz5odKN_heYZRf0aNs7xh1_Xrb2z0AnbZG4Q1uq1rM5TUKNhf1o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=969.33)):

When the veterinarian says it's safe, then the pre-veterinary track students come out and they assist with the different jobs that the veterinarian has for them, if it is to give vitamin injections, or if it is to give antibiotics or dewormers. It's a great learning experience. Nothing is staged, it's all real, real animals and real situations. And then, TB is a real disease in that part of the world, in Africa. So to test for TB in cave buffaloes, to test for TB, even in cheetahs, because TB is now prevalent in 40% of the lions in Kruger, according to the latest reports.

Shweta ([17:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7hjM755FZP48dD8Qh4eVuoILCh_b6xq6lJOmUKujZgFJgcpd4at1JCqFO8Lh6SExzvSD-cQ0fNVI1WujBOfgLGMt3zk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1072.87)):

The other study abroad that I offer is in the United Kingdom. It is at Harper Adams University, and it is an animal behavior and veterinary physiotherapy. British veterinarians are ahead of us when it comes to animal behavior in research, as well as in that specific science.

And so because Harper has a strength in animal behavior and animal behavior research, our students get to partake in small animal, large animal, farm animal, and exotic animal behaviors.

And for physiotherapy, we teach them all the different types of therapies that are out there. And the British faculty are very engaged. And students come back with this great appreciation for the faculty and teaching and the hands-on experiences with hydrotherapy, laser therapy, massage, that goes on over there as a part of a physiotherapy.

Shweta ([19:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cv3rZyMjbD0Gta1iJuAwfi8sea0w8K2NfjdplrCDOlVhbuXV0YGpWgtVtoLfxHbykKadPmmeK3b_esDeFnqQG3zjTMU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1190.95)):

The other recent opportunities that I developed in VetPAC in the last five years, those are feline health internship. It is on kitten mortality, and it's research-based, so probiotics and microbiome studies and our pre-vet students get to partake in those hands-on opportunities. And then vet school comes into play where we have the canine college internship. So these were the internships that I was able to build as a part of those hands-on component that I critically wanted within VetPAC.

Tracey ([21:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fQym--waUwYSzP6KVhH6vOEClCj03wUasJtrhTk-D3UJiDvA1Lxm-V9X2-mNv2pJyUHBgucKjp1H705RW50UBZT21w0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1293.65)):

Okay. Well, it sounds like from avoiding crazy giraffe legs to taking DNA samples from rhinos, to learning about how sheep may behave, to dealing with kittens and dogs, they have a wide range of opportunities available for them. And I always ask this of folks. And so I'm going to ask this of you as well. What is your most memorable experience doing any of these, working with the animals or the students, or when you were abroad or even here? What are your most memorable experiences?

Shweta ([22:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vcpfdx9jWc2YZV8vkSjr-ex6Gm5VWjc1K8j1DXUGxEYvrWTbcM4Pd83xGrafvuHxdl5Okl6IVZnXuxoyari_5X5vxIg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1333.25)):

Absolutely. So I was thinking of several things, as you were asking these questions, and I'll try to be eloquent about each one of those. So the fact that I could get students engaged in undergraduate research while we were in South Africa and in India was tremendous. I think that was one of the most memorable things that I have been able to do broadly and specifically, I would say being able to change the radio collar on a Bengal tiger was tremendous. I was never that close and being able to lift it's lip up and look at that real big tooth. The canine was amazing. It was a certain breath that the tigress had, but I would say it was an absolutely thrilling experience.

Shweta ([23:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9uo0XJuG6z2b-0oEBDB9Wr2G8Y7k8v6LVbm3kN1cJCmb482Yqr-R4uvkSSel-U4D6VD7WE9Yyne-NQQb_-QLoNaSZmA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1437.42)):

The other experience that comes to my mind is when we are able to take students to the museum medicine internship I have gone on and just hung out with them. I saw this growth in the students where they were not just able to talk about a case intelligently in veterinary medical terms with each other, but they were able to also educate the community that was visiting.

Shweta ([24:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1EXCpAfvhYDDW_nzl-YLXvLQd7mQTNJs4rs03fZUa3xzcM9nNjPKcKNeiydLs2_bfP2K0Zs9BWk4FNLBKHYEREsrioY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1483.32)):

And these students had become those confident young individuals, that were able to talk and educate the general public about the procedure that was being done on a cold, stunned turtle, or a non-venomous snake. If it was just even a health exam and how to proceed with it, it's a two-way mic. And they were able to communicate. That's where the real impact of those partnerships was kind of observed by me. And that just made every bit of what it took me to develop and grow VetPAC to where it is right now, very worthwhile and very fulfilling.

Shweta ([25:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UCYEzTrGD0TtwHa8lJYeL9eVRXCkU41CO8g6kNBZ9yJziC4ZpNBuQwUERA-JRTNJ1DMuG6g7bv36M4vNheu2WXkSgYc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1534.09)):

It just makes me think about how I roll out of the bed every day, very excited to come to State and just support the students the way we do, so that when they arrive at vet school, they are these confident individuals who have these experiences under their belt that they can use as that platform to really explore further what it is within the field of veterinary medicine, to either become an exotic animal veterinarian or a small animal practitioner, or maybe go into research as a veterinarian, could be clinical or could be basic.

Tracey ([26:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1xI6ts4504LQz1jFt4PbMN8fZdX2P4hPaK8nSOOakbNkOPXi6SQGYVZpV-4YqdN8pBF2J_0y6w3dPSVy9xEAZRDIZWg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1575.55)):

Okay. And so finally, how can interested students get involved in VetPAC? Is there an application process or do they just need to go to your website or what?

Shweta ([26:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PGmpj57xdby9KJNkKiQO8hNfwMwVAhzeldTtKf8kKihjeK3zua_9MYQxIRlY9GkC9PfZ-rQFiQv49nrqXICH3BcOnqg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1587.37)):

Yes, absolutely. So all our student that come in as freshmen or transfer students, we host several year long events. We do first year orientation for them. We do a networking event for them and we hold seminar series. So once students become aware of what VetPAC is, which is it's not a club, its just an advising center, then they get to enroll in VetPAC, which it's a free resource available. So they can go and create their student profile. You need your unity ID. And then all the resources are available.

Shweta ([27:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tPNPEn1ckapeg6OwQmlD27m4q1SqdhssQKjnqtm1lJfBEI5DZmfaqEhqIG_RZAvrqVV4_FL7DpFKKFRsWRc7F_WF5pw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1630.78)):

As they enroll with us, their email is automatically added to the list serve. And through this, I let them know of the events that are coming up. I let them know of the job opportunities. CVM faculty contact me for research positions for undergrads that are available in their labs. So it is used very judiciously to focus heavily on pre-veterinary activities to help them build the diversity, duration and depth in the experiences that they typically need to be that unique applicant, to be that competitive applicant and not just a mere illegible applicant.

Tracey ([27:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PvEjDCJhsvhyYp0IijO-v_-bcIRv7jmaDp-iSVlbNnBzlE-fTNEz_m2vIkCkqxEbhACbde9EvpTOAixdUZgxyrjhWbk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1672.65)):

VetPAC is definitely a unique and interesting resource and I too would be amazed to lift up a Bengal tiger's lip and look at that giant tooth, probably the size of my finger.

Shweta ([28:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yxWTCu8-A-laOao_hqFZG33nDPaoQVW9gOavHtzuQ29nHdU14_CfMquRZuz3K4lU6U6fK-gmkQFru73CZXcF_gSSAxY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1689.59)):

Easily. Easily. Yeah, absolutely.

Tracey ([28:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=A4tI8hRUqIcbLj7FQZwpFHKB7xpVgOT3hn-6U3NpNAzd3GIA4s7eg475wmhuG5tn2gAy5_YJupstEv2VLT8lKmPI43w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1692.88)):

Well, thank you so much for being here today, Shweta.

Shweta ([28:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8R1dBFiUbKUnB1YwLzVUTYyKhZtfNiHuVKhN1eENXl89o9k75HQ9SQoGQ8HYoeMf_2hrKecz_TAkZfhm6eEp9t08ZEg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1696.29)):

You're very welcome, Tracey.

Tracey ([28:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u4BArU3yVaCk9x-oHmPVq2bN9LzMMG4E5PFdDHpySQfCwGQQRBH58IqotSvEIlLCJe_KYKVtElM-0clMHzwmMXFLRWg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1717.38)):

We've been speaking today with Shweta Trivedi, Director of the VetPAC program here at NC State. This has been Audio Abstract. I'm your host, Tracey Peake. Thank you so much for listening.