



News Release

For Immediate Release – 9/13/2017
Contact: Liz VanDerBill
Director of Communications and Marketing
320-222-6090

Fax: 320-222-5212
Liz.VanDerBill@ridgewater.edu
www.ridgewater.edu

Ridgewater's Veterinary Technology Program Ranked One of the Best in the Country

WILLMAR and HUTCHINSON – Ridgewater College is proud to announce that its Veterinary Technology program has been ranked #22 among the U.S. top 50 veterinary technician programs in the country, according to www.TheBestColleges.org.

Ridgewater College Veterinary Technology program chair Dr. Al Balay is thankful for the honor for the program that offers a 75-credit associate of applied science degree in two and a half years. About 60 new students start each fall. "There are about 220 programs in the USA, so for us to be recognized like this means we're in the top 10% of the programs in the country," Balay said. "It's a big deal," he said, especially since some vet tech programs in Minnesota have closed in the last couple years.

"Ridgewater's Vet Tech program strives for excellence every day," said Mike Kutzke, one of Ridgewater's deans of instruction. "Through practical, hands-on experiences in classes, labs, internships, and the program's Paws and Claws Clinic, students truly get a feel for what they'll be doing as certified veterinary technicians. Kudos to the entire department."

The program's excellent reputation and student experiences confirm the worthiness of the honor for students and graduates who come from various states.

"These amazing instructors...teach you much more than how to become great vet techs," said student Hailey Smude. "This program would not be anywhere near as incredible as it is without the caring, hardworking, passionate, and sometimes stubborn people (gratefully so) that are running it. This year has been a journey that I will never forget and will always be grateful for. I have made many friends, I have learned much more than I thought I would, and my love and passion for animals has magnified to an intensity that I didn't think was possible."

In addition to the exceptional hands-on experience in Ridgewater's Veterinary Technology program for which it has been recognized, five distinctions make it a first choice for many students enrolled, according to Balay:

1. Affordability
2. Full accreditation status from the American Veterinary Medical Association
3. 95% or better placement
4. Low student/instructor ratio of 8:1 or better in labs
5. International internship experiences within its 12 internships weeks

It's been a positive couple years for Ridgewater Vet Tech honors. In 2016, Balay was recognized as one of the country's top 40 veterinary technology professors. Top criteria included teaching and service excellence.

To learn more about the Ridgewater Veterinary Technology program, go to www.ridgewater.edu/vettech. To learn more about the recognition, go to <http://www.thebestcolleges.org/top-vet-tech-schools/>. To learn more about the recent Vet Tech professor recognition, go here: <http://www.vettechcolleges.com/blog/40-top-veterinary-technology-profs> .

PHOTO: From left, graduate Kari Lone and student Marissa Woodring (both from South Dakota), and graduate Johanna Crane and student Samara Hansen (both from North Dakota).

###

Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. Thanks to generous donors, the Ridgewater Foundation provides between \$225,000 and \$275,000 annually in student scholarships, and more than \$400,000 in additional cash and non-cash support for equipment, supplies, technology enhancements, and other essentials benefiting academic programs. The college is a member of Minnesota State and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and seven state universities serving approximately 400,000 students. It is the fourth-largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.

A MEMBER OF MINNESOTA STATE