(August 19, 2009 Stillwater, OK) – Two Oklahoma State University (OSU) Center for Veterinary Health Sciences students spent the summer at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) headquarters in Bethesda, Md. Amy Edwards, Class of 2011, and Brooke Washington, Class of 2012, were two of four veterinary students participating in the NIH's Summer Internship Program.

Edwards worked under Michael Grigg, Ph.D., in the Laboratory of Parasitic Diseases through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Specifically, she studied Toxoplasma gondii, a member of the Apicomplexa, a category of parasites that includes a number of medically and agriculturally significant pathogens. Edwards' work involves characterizing different properties of this protozoan, which contribute to its virulence and wide host range.

Edwards has this to say about her experience, "This has been a very enriching opportunity. I have learned so much and cannot wait to apply these new skills, once I arrive home at OSU."

Washington worked in the Laboratory of Cellular Oncology with Dr. John Schiller, one of two inventors on the patent for the Gardasil vaccine. Washington's research dealt with the immune response of mice after immunization with different combinations of the major and minor capsid protein of HPV Type 16.

"Every person from the primary investigators to the post-doctorate fellows to the post-baccalaureates helped me in any way they could," says Washington. "They're just regular people who want to make a difference in this world. They use their success to help others in

the science community continue to improve our knowledge on emerging health issues and how to create innovative solutions for these issues."

Edwards and Washington will present their research at the Veterinary Scholars Symposium in Raleigh, N.C., in August. Edwards is the daughter of Judy Edwards of Norman, Okla. Washington is the daughter of Donna and Booker Washington of Oklahoma City, Okla.

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States and is fully accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The center's Boren Veterinary Medial Teaching Hospital is open to the public and provides routine and specialized care for small and large animals. It also offers 24 hour emergency care and is certified by the American Animal Hospital Association. For more information, visit www.cvhs.okstate.edu or call (405) 744-7000.

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