Canine connection could prompt Parkinson’s treatment

The first presentation in the fall 2014 Topics in Regenerative Medicine lecture series at Sacramento State is at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 28, in University Union Ballroom 1. The lecture, “Stem Cell Therapy Is Going to the Dogs! Translational Applications from Canine to Human Patients,” will be presented by Richard Vulliet, DVM, Ph.D. The event is free and open to the public.

Vulliet will discuss his current research focused on the use of adult bone-marrow stem cells for treating “untreatable” canine diseases – that is, those lacking effective treatments. Diseases being tested for response to stem cell therapy include degenerative myelopathy (a canine form of human familial ALS), dilated cardiomyopathy, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and early-onset Parkinson’s disease.

In pilot dogs, those widely varied diseases all appear to benefit from stem cell therapy, suggesting that the cells may work through multiple therapeutic mechanisms. Larger clinical trials are planned to confirm the initial observations. Dog patients can help speed novel therapies into human clinics while benefiting themselves and their fellow canines.

Vulliet, a professor of molecular biosciences at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, received his doctorate from the University of Colorado, Denver, and his DVM from Colorado State University, Fort Collins. He has received numerous awards for his work and is the founder of ReGena-Vet Laboratories, LLC.

Presented by the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the Center for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Excellence, the Topics in Regenerative Medicine lectures are funded through a California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) grant in collaboration with the UC Davis Stem Cell Program.

Questions regarding the event may be directed to Sacramento State’s Center for STEM Excellence at (916) 278-2789 or stem@csus.edu. For more information on the Topics in Regenerative Medicine lecture series, contact Dr. Rosalee Sprowls at carterrc@csus.edu.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156. – Alan Miller