



STEEL CENTER
FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

PROGRAM LETTER

Veterinary Assistant CIP 01.8301

Bagua'Karaya-Nikkele Gonzalez, CVT, VTS (ECC)
2025-2026

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Dear Steel Center Family:

My name is Bagua Gonzalez, and I am the teacher for the Veterinary Assistant Program. I am a Certified Veterinary Technician and a Board-Certified Veterinary Technician Specialist in Emergency and Critical Care. I have worked in clinical practice for over 12 years, working in general practice, specialty practice and focusing on Emergency and Critical Care. In addition to working in Critical Care, I spent 7 years teaching at a post-secondary level at the Vet Tech Institute. I have spent the past 5 years teaching Veterinary programs on the secondary educational level. I have served the Veterinary Community through multiple publications and serving as a leader for both the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association and serving the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America. I look forward to sharing my passion for Veterinary Medicine with you.

Students enrolled in the Veterinary Assistant Program will learn more about animals, including:

- Animal Anatomy and Physiology, including diseases of each of the following systems:
 - Sensory
 - Integument
 - Musculoskeletal
 - Circulatory
 - Respiratory
 - Neurological
 - Urinary
 - Endocrine
 - Reproductive
 - Immune
 - Digestive
- Small Animal Care
 - Bathing and grooming
 - Toenail trims
 - Ear cleaning
 - General animal husbandry
 - Animal Behavior and Restraint

- Laboratory techniques
 - Fecal analysis
 - Urinalysis
 - Packed Cell Volume and Differentials
- Client Communication, Education and Office Procedures
- Surgical Assisting
 - Preparing surgical packs
 - Surgical Pack Sterilization
 - Surgical Instrument Identification

The topics above are just a few things that will be covered.

This program will give exposure to animals; however, this is a medicine-based course, requiring development of science and math-based skills. The class consists of 70% of theory, to learn behavior, anatomy and physiology, as well as some common diseases of animals. The class will be 30% hands on, where students will have the opportunity to learn and practice skills on live animals (only available when students meet pre-requisite requirements that can be completed in class).

My goal is to prepare students to be successful in a Veterinary setting and make them ready to enter an entry level position in a Veterinary Hospital as a Veterinary Assistant. This program will also help prepare students that wish to pursue post-secondary education as a Veterinary Technician or a Veterinarian. Over the course of 3 years, the students will also have field trips where they will have the opportunity to see Veterinary Hospitals and post-secondary institutions to help prepare them for their future career.

A requirement for Veterinary Assistant students is to have a uniform for the program. The uniform includes:

- 3 pairs of scrubs
 - Including 3 scrub tops and 3 pairs scrub pants
 - All in the Navy Color
 - Watch (needs to be able to show the seconds)
- Closed toe, slip resistant work shoes
- Stethoscope (for 2nd and 3rd years)
- Watch that can count seconds (2nd and 3rd years only)
- Hair Tie if hair is shoulder length or longer

Scrub recommendations and ordering will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

Stethoscopes can vary in price based on company (from \$20 to a few hundred) and the students will be provided with website links and handouts to determine which stethoscope will fit best for them and their budget. A very basic model is all that will be needed for this program.

I look forward to working with you during this 2025/2026 school year to build your personal and technical skills as a Veterinary Assistant. If you have any questions regarding the program, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number or email listed above.

Sincerely,

Bagua'Karaya-Nikkele Gonzalez
Veterinary Assistant Instructor