

Assessment of Non-Academic Outcomes (Fall 2003 and Spring 2004)

Unit: **Center for Animal Assisted Therapy (CAAT)**

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Introduction: The Center for Animal Assisted Therapy (CAAT) and the supporting animal assisted therapy programs are new and expanding rapidly. AAT is a field with accelerating interest nationwide and internationally as well. Creative efforts in marketing our program and making it more accessible to others will insure its success. The CAAT at UNT is the only one of its kind in a counseling program in the State of Texas or in the Nation. It is one of only seven like centers in the U.S., the other six being in the fields of education, social work and in veterinary medicine.

I. Mission The mission of the Center for Animal Assisted Therapy (CAAT) at the University of North Texas is to train professionals and volunteers to work with their pets to: 1) facilitate the development of students in Kindergarten through 12th grade with pet-assisted educational programs; and 2) enhance the emotional well-being of persons of all ages through positive human-animal interactions. To fulfill its objectives, the CAAT has the following areas of focus:

- Goal 1: Provide training in the field of animal assisted therapy to graduate students and professionals seeking national certification in animal assisted therapy.
- Goal 2: Conduct animal assisted therapy research, establish funding for animal assisted therapy, and provide laboratory facilities for conducting research in animal assisted therapy.
- Goal 3: Network with agencies and schools to promote and provide high quality animal assisted therapy services in the North Texas region and throughout the State.
- Goal 4: Assist graduate students in obtaining graduate training and national certification in animal assisted therapy and promote diversity among students seeking training through the provision of scholarships.

The Center for Animal Assisted Therapy achieves the above stated goals through the provision of two primary programs: the R.E.A.D. program and the T.A.T. program.

R.E.A.D. Program. This stands for Reading Education Assistance Dogs program. UNT is in partnership with Rocky Mountain Therapy Dogs of Salt Lake City, Utah in providing their standardized reading assistance program to children who are reading challenged. Volunteers and professionals spend a few hours or more a month with their pets at various public libraries and schools to assist children with reading skills or other pet-assisted educational activities. The therapy dog serves to motivate the child to attend and participate in reading practice and other educational programs.

T.A.T. Program. This stands for Therapy Animal Teams program. The CAAT is in partnership with the national certification organization Delta Society, headquartered in Renton, Washington, to provide volunteer and professional certification training for Pet

Partner teams and Animal Assisted Therapy. Volunteers and professionals can complete a weekend workshop to become volunteer Pet Partner teams who visit with their pets at schools, nursing homes, agencies, hospitals, and so forth. Graduate students and professionals can take a graduate training course in Animal Assisted Therapy to learn how to integrate their pet into the professional setting, such as counseling or rehabilitation. The therapy pet is a co-therapist, or pet-practitioner that assists in the provision of professional services. The pet's presence also is a considerable motivating force for the client in their recovery process.

II. Previous Evaluations of the Unit: The final approval process for the Center for Animal Assisted Therapy was not completed until 2003. No previous evaluations exist. The CAAT was established with a \$33,000 grant from IAMS, Paws to Share Foundation. Activities to develop and operate the CAAT began in the year 2002.

III. Statement of Expected Outcomes for 2003-2004:

Professional and Graduate Student Training

- Continue to offer a graduate course in AAT once a year that provides national certification in AAT for graduate students and professionals. (We began offering the course as COUN 5800, Special Topics in Summer 2001 and again in Summer 2002 and as an approved course COUN 5530, Animal Assisted Therapy in Summer 2003).
- Continue offering community weekend training workshops at least twice per year that provides national certification as a Pet Partner team for community volunteers and professionals. (Over twelve workshops have been offered across two years; trained over 175 participants. The first eleven workshops were free to participants, now an individual participant fee of \$45.00 is assessed to cover the cost of the workshop and provide support for the operation of the CAAT. Also, persons must maintain their national certification and be re-certified every two years and we charge \$25.00 to provide that recertification process.).
- The UNT CAAT program is one of only two national certification programs for community volunteers in the entire North Texas Region and the only national certification program for counseling professionals in the state of Texas. Thus the CAAT fulfills a great need for this type of training.

Research and Funding:

- Continue to solicit additional funds to support the operation of the CAAT. Workshop fees will continue to be used to support the operations of the CAAT. In addition, grants will be sought from IAMS, Paws to Share Foundation and other resources to support the operations of the CAAT.
- Continue to hire graduate student to gather research data at approved sites participating in CAAT activities. (This consists of five schools and two agencies.)
- Continue to perform research to study the clinical efficacy of AAT. (Currently gathering data for 3 separate research projects: two at Rocky Top Therapy Center and one at Juvenile Detention Center.)
- Continue to present research results at professional meetings and prepare manuscripts for publication in nationally refereed journals. (Presentations on Animal Assisted Therapy given at the Hawaiian International Conference on Education in 2003; Texas

Counseling Association 2003; and the American Counseling Association in Anaheim, California in 2003; and at the 1st International Meeting on the Human Animal Bond in South Korea in 2003)

Network with Agencies and Schools to Provide Services

- Continue to network with local school programs to establish R.E.A.D (Reading Education Assistance Dogs) in local schools and libraries. (READ programs established at the following sites: Razyor Elementary, Denton; Hedrick Elementary, Lewisville; Flower Mound Library, Flower Mound; and Montclair Elementary, Garland).
- Continue to network with local agencies to set up internship sites for graduate students providing AAT. (Current sites: Denton County Juvenile Detention – Post Adjudication Program, contact person Laura Prillwitz; Rocky Top Therapy Center, Right Trail Program, contact person, Deborah Bond.)
- Continue to provide a link from CDHE department to a new website page describing the AAT program. (Completed: Spring 2003, see www.coe.unt.edu/CDHE/AAT. This website provides much international publicity. I answer 30 to 40 inquiries per week regarding our AAT program from website contacts, including from other countries, i.e., South Korea, Wales, India, and Argentina.) Many interested parties are requesting information on enrolling into our graduate program in Counseling just to study Animal Assisted Therapy.
- Continue to develop a regional, state, national/international reputation in AAT. (Completed and ongoing: 1) We are listed on the national website for Delta Society as an AAT provider at www.deltasociety.org; 2) TCA newsletter (2003) referenced our program as the only University training program in Texas for AAT; 3) Presented at both state and national counseling/education conferences on AAT; 4) Samsung corporation sent their director for their new AAT program in South Korea over here to the U.S. to study at our AAT program for 7 weeks (summer 2003); 5) The director of the CAAT accepted invitation to South Korea to speak at an AAT symposium in November 2003 and consult for two weeks with Samsung Assistance Dog Services in Seoul and the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cheju University in JeJu, Korea. While there I evaluated and certified the first two therapy dog teams in Korea. I submitted an article to a national magazine about the Korean trip and it is under review; 6) AAT workshop participants have traveled from as far away as Oklahoma, Louisiana, Austin, Houston, Abilene and Lubbock.

Assisting Students and Promoting Diversity

- Dr. Cynthia Chandler has provided and will continue to provide her personal monthly donation for the purpose of the eventual endowment of a \$10,000 student scholarship for the study of animal assisted therapy at UNT, **The Dr. Cynthia K. Chandler, Professor and Rusty Chandler, Therapy Dog Scholarship**. Endowment should be completed by the target date December, 2006.
- Continue to solicit funding from additional resources for the establishment of additional scholarships and endowments for students to study animal assisted therapy at UNT.

- Continue to provide animal assisted therapy services to a diverse population. Many of the persons who benefit from animal assisted therapy research and services of the CAAT are disabled persons, elderly persons, at risk children, or ethnic minority children. Animal assisted therapy workshops and courses provided by the CAAT at UNT train persons to work with their dogs in schools, libraries, nursing homes, hospitals, juvenile detention centers, rehabilitation centers and therapy centers.
- The director of the CAAT works closely with the directors of the internship sites and school programs to gain feedback on how well these programs are functioning.

IV: Measuring Expected Outcomes:

- At the completion of each training workshop participants complete a standardized evaluation form designed by Delta Society, the national certification organization for animal assisted therapy. These evaluations are sent to Delta Society who oversees the quality control of the UNT CAAT program.
- At the completion of each graduate course offering students complete a standardized evaluation form designed by the University of North Texas, College of Education.

V: Use of Assessment Results:

The workshop and course evaluations are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the presenter and program information. The evaluations are tabulated and feedback is taken into consideration in organizing and presenting the topics. The Center for Animal Assisted Therapy strives to provide the most professional and educational training in animal assisted therapy in this area. This unique training opportunity provides students, professionals, and community volunteers with accessibility to leading information in the field of animal assisted therapy.

Feedback that is gathered from supervisors at animal assisted therapy internship sites is used to adapt or modify animal assisted therapy services as deemed necessary.

VI: Changes Made Based On Assessment Results:

Decisions about the organization, structure, and content of each workshop and graduate course are adapted or modified based on the suggestions of the participants' evaluation.

Animal assisted therapy at internship sites is adapted or modified based on the feedback of field supervisors and is carefully tuned to the needs of the diverse populations being served.

Signature of Person Completing the Form:

_____ Date: _____

Signature of Unit Head after Reviewing this Form:

_____ Date: _____

