**Department News**

- We will have a new Program Assistant, Brandy Mills, joining the department. Please join us in welcoming her this Thursday, Jan 12th at 10:30am in 618 LH.

**COVID-19 Update**

- The University is continuing its COVID testing and guidelines in response to the recent increase in cases across the country. If you have not received a booster, weekly asymptomatic testing will be required. Additionally, graduate students are required to have been tested by the 14th of January to remain on campus. Additional information and guidance can be found here.

**Congrats to...**

- Dr. Andrea Krook, who defended her thesis last month.
- Dr. Brenda Wood, for her first author publication.
- Andrea Christopher (Student).
- Bozco and teammates.
- The Open nephew with Matthew and Prince Harry.

The results are in!

- Most of you (76.9% vs. 23.1%) would rather have a “carrot for a nose” than “sticks for arms.” I imagine quitting would be a bit more challenging with long fingers, so we respect this choice.

**In Other News**

- The university is expanding the COVID-19 asymptomatic testing program. Effective Jan. 18, individuals must provide proof of a booster, if eligible, to be exempt from the asymptomatic testing program.
- Due to peak hours, the Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness center will be closed on Monday, Jan 10, to allow for the appropriate time.

**University News**

- In addition, masks are required indoors on campus.
- ASPIRE events are up and running again for the year. Please contact us for more information.
- In case you missed it, the Lab-To-Lab Conservation event was a huge success. The event was held on December 16th (and moderated by Biochemistry faculty Brandy Carter). If you’re still interested in watching, you can do so here.

**Wellness**

- Physical Wellness: Basketball, anyone? Gym courts are open at 8am and closed at 10pm. Gyms courts are open at 8am and closed at 10pm. It’s the perfect time to get your fitness routine going!
- Mental Wellness: For Trainee of the Month! Jen Smith in 607LH. Please join us in welcoming her on January 12th at 10:30am in 618 LH.
- We also want to thank everyone for submitting their pictures for the website and this newsletter. Keep an eye out for our new design next month!**