

“Addressing the complex issues surrounding animal welfare requires contributions from individuals with diverse perspectives and skills sets.”



AN INTERVIEW WITH

KAYLA PASTEUR



CURRENT STATUS:
GRADUATE STUDENT

DEPARTMENT:
COMPARATIVE PATHOBIOLOGY

FACULTY ADVISOR:
DR. CANDACE CRONEY

Tell us a little bit about yourself – hobbies, interests, a fun fact?

I was born and raised in southern Maryland, right outside the Washington, D.C. area. I really enjoy watching documentaries, hiking, and traveling with friends and family.

What was your undergraduate area of study?

I obtained my Bachelor of Science in Animal, Poultry, and Veterinary Sciences from Tuskegee University.

How/where were you first exposed to ideas about animal welfare?

During my time working for USDA, I had an incredible PI who, one day, gifted me the book “Animals Make Us Human” by Temple Grandin and that transformed how I initially viewed animal behavior and ignited my interest in animal welfare.

How did you choose your area of study and the professor you work with?

Upon completing my undergraduate degree, I knew I was interested in pursuing research in animal welfare science. However, it was important to me that my studies be of service to both animals and the people who care for them. I was later introduced to Dr. Croney by a colleague I had met during Purdue’s Graduate Diversity Visitation Program. After a brief discussion about potential research topics, it became very clear that we shared the same goals and we’d be a good fit.

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What type of a job are you interested in after you receive your degree?

After receiving my PhD, I would be interested in transitioning back into government work, broadening my research interests to include not only animal welfare but topics related to One Welfare, public health, and equity. In a perfect world, I would also like to incorporate some degree of mentorship and community outreach into any position I may have.

Can you tell us about your current research focus?

My overarching research focus is to explore some of the veterinary and socio-ethical factors that potentially underlie differences in access to the resources necessary to maintain animal welfare. Some of the factors considered in my studies include socio-economic disparities in access to veterinary care, culturally competent veterinary-client interactions, and client education on and attitudes towards animal welfare.

What is the connection between what you are researching and animal welfare science?

Ensuring that all communities have access to the necessary resources (e.g., veterinary care, animal welfare information) is incredibly important to achieving and maintaining animal welfare. The outcomes of these studies will provide insights to veterinarians as they support animal welfare by addressing gaps in information, client communication, and blind-spots that may otherwise exist.

What two pieces of advice would you give to someone who cares about Animal Welfare and wants to get started in the field or apply to grad school?

I would first encourage them to make a habit of reading the animal welfare information they have access to. Choose a few of your favorite authors and reach out to them because building a relationship with a great mentor already in the field can be invaluable! Secondly, I would say that experience is the best teacher, and no opportunity is a waste of time. . Take advantage of seminars, conferences, and research opportunities big or small. They will help refine your skills and identify what you are truly passionate about.

“Safeguarding animal welfare means we must ensure that all communities have the necessary resources to achieve and maintain animal welfare.”