My Internship Helped Me Develop as a Clinician  
by Kelly Lin, DVM

Dr. Lin, a 2012 UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine graduate, is sharing her experiences during her first year as a veterinarian.

While the first six months of my internship have been a whirlwind of new experiences, challenging cases, and a glut of information, I feel fortunate to have had the support of numerous mentors to help me through my growing pains. Although there have been exhausting days where both my intellectual and emotional strength has been put to the test, I know that these experiences can only help shape my ability to become a more well-rounded clinician and advance my career skills. As I reach the half-way point of one of the most challenging years of my life, it’s hard to look back and quantify how far I’ve progressed. While I can count the hours spent in the hospital, number of cases seen, types of surgeries performed, and clients I’ve conversed with, none of these truly reflect my development as a clinician. However, when I look back and think how much more comfortable I am at working up cases relative to how I started in June, I know that pursuing an internship was the right decision for me to build the confidence and experience I needed to grow as a veterinarian.

As the match season comes to an end, I am impressed by all the intern candidates I’ve met and talked to regarding their motivations and goals for the next few years. Having been in their shoes just a few months ago, I know how stressful it is to apply, rank, and interview at numerous hospitals trying to find the best fit. I admire each one of the candidates for their willingness to invest their time, effort, and finances into what will be a challenging year of learning. While I chose not to enter the match this year, I know I will be going through a similar process in the coming months trying to find a position at a practice that will allow for mutual growth. Although I am not sure where the job search might take me, I know that I will be a better clinician having had an additional year of learning under my belt.

No matter where I practice, I will be taking with me my most memorable cases. Patches, a cock-a-poo who survived a thoracotomy, lung lobectomy, radiation, and chemotherapy for metastatic hemangiosarcoma and pneumothorax, taught me how far clients will go for the pets they love. Bailee, a hit-by-car lab with multiple fractures and a hemoabdomen, taught me how important it is to give owners hope during the most difficult decisions. Honey, a geriatric cat who recovered post-craniotomy for a meningioma, taught me the importance of offering all diagnostic and treatment options. While there are always tragic cases and difficult clients, I appreciate the opportunity to learn from every case I’ve come across. In spite of the challenges of the last six months, I am looking forward to maximizing my learning during the rest of my internship and continuing to grow as a clinician throughout my career.