



Meet Animal Husbandry Supervisor/Veterinary Assistant – Bridgette Engi, BS, LATG

How long have you worked at UAMS?

Since July of 2009. I worked in a veterinary clinic in private practice prior to joining UAMS and DLAM.

Summarize your current job responsibilities.

Initially, I started in DLAM as a husbandry technician because that was the only job open at the time. Later, I was promoted to a veterinary assistant and more recently I have been given the added responsibility of being an Animal Husbandry Supervisor.

What aspect of your job do you find the most engaging?

I really enjoy the technical aspects of my job. I also enjoy teaching new researchers about what services we can offer them. One aspect of my job involves managing rodent breeding colonies. I work with Dr. Simecka on managing the import/exportation process for our research animals. Many of the procurements are on an international basis and involve several layers of rules and regulations, but I get great satisfaction every time we complete one of these projects (for our investigators) successfully.

What is your favorite part of your job in DLAM?

I enjoy the way we handle problems in our Division. As a group our department handles issues of concern by meeting and talking about different ways to solve the problem. All opinions are respected. No matter what position a person may hold, each viewpoint is given the same respect. I know that my perspective on the dilemma is important. We try and make all problems a teachable moment.

Are there any challenges?

The challenges often include trying to figure out how to best support the research community while not introducing variables and yet controlling cost for the investigators.

What traits have made you successful?

I think my best traits include persistence and a desire to help. I believe the research done at UAMS is very important and I take very seriously my part in making sure that research is done well. I know that I represent DLAM and I understand the pivotal role that we play in the larger picture of research on this campus.

You work with animals. What in your life has helped with that part of your job?

I have been married 15 years and I have a stepdaughter, daughter and son. We have one dog, three cats, a large white rabbit, a chinchilla and a fish. So obviously animals are a big part of our lives!

What is something most UAMS folks don't know about you?

I was actually born in Arkansas and most of my family lives here. We traveled much of my young life including time spent in Europe. My father was in the Air Force for 20+ years and my husband was in the Army for 6 years. I lived in England for 4 years from age 7 – 11 and Italy for one year (age 19). My husband and I moved to Germany after our first child was born and we lived in Wiesbaden for 4 years and had our second child in a very small hospital there. I would go back in a heartbeat to any of those places, but Italy was probably my favorite. The people there are so laid back and expressive, you always feel like part of a big family. Very similar to Arkansas in some ways!

Any last thoughts on your position as Animal Husbandry Supervisor/Veterinary Assistant?

I hope to continue my career at UAMS for a long time. I intend to continue studying for my last AALAS certification. I have reached the first three levels (ALAT, LAT and LATG) since I have been working at DLAM. I am always interested in acquiring new skills and information which will assist the research community and advance the capabilities of the DLAM.

Do you have any career advice for folks interested in DLAM?

My advice for my own children and any young person is to always be willing to do any aspect of the career you are interested in from the bottom up. This will build your knowledge and understanding as you advance. For those interested in working with animals; you must be passionate and compassionate. Working in research, with or without animals, requires patience and persistence. It is hard work and not a field of immediate rewards but very much worth it.

Bridgette Engi, BS, LATG (Laboratory Animal Technologist)
Job Title- Animal Husbandry Supervisor/Veterinary Assistant
BNEngi@uams.edu
501-686-8112

