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## Interview with Dirk Vanderwall

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USU COVID-19 2022 Oral History  
TRANSCRIPTION COVER SHEET

Interviewee(s): Dr. Dirk Vanderwall

Place of interview: Agricultural Sciences, 248A

Date of interview: May 16, 2022

Interviewer(s): Todd Welch & Tameron Gentry Raines Williams

Recordist: Tameron Gentry Raines Williams

Photographer:

Recording equipment: Zoom H5 Handy digital audio recorder; Senal ENG-18RL omnidirectional microphone

Transcription equipment: NCH Express Scribe Transcription Software

Transcribed by/date: Pioneer Transcription Services/Lauren Coombe/17 June 2022

Transcript proofed by/date: Dirk Vanderwall/10 October 2022

Brief description of interview: Dr. Dirk Vanderwall discusses his time as department head of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences and his role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in a hands-on learning environment and how the department endeavored to offer much of the same program to its students despite the challenges.

References: TW: Todd Welch  
DV: Dirk Vanderwall  
TGRW:Tameron Gentry Raines Williams

NOTE: Interjections during pauses, transitions in dialogue (such as “umm”), and false starts and stops in conversations are not included in transcribed. All additions to transcript noted with brackets.

## TRANSCRIPTION

[00:02]

TW: Today is Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022. My name is Todd Welch from the Merrill-Cazier Library Special Collections and Archives. This afternoon we are interviewing Dr. Dirk Vanderwall, professor of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences within the College of Ag and Applied Sciences at Utah State University. Dr. Vanderwall was the department head for ADVS as well as the associate dean during the Covid outbreak and subsequent pandemic. This is another oral history interview for the Covid Collection Project. Joining us on the interview is Tameron Williams, the Covid Collection Project graduate intern.

Good afternoon, Dr. Vanderwall.

DV: Todd, thank you very much. It's my pleasure to have a chance to visit with you and Tameron this afternoon.

TW: So, let's start by asking, when did you start your career at Utah State University and the various positions you've held during your USU career?

DV: I first came to USU in August of 2012 to be a faculty member in the newly formed School of Veterinary Medicine at Utah State University with its home academic department in the Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department, ADVS, as you indicated. So, I came to be a faculty member in ADVS to teach and do research in the USU School of Veterinary Medicine. And to provide a little more contact about the USU School of Veterinary Medicine, the SVM, our current program is referred to as a two-plus-two partnership program with Washington State University and the broader Washington Idaho Montana Utah, or WIMU regional program in veterinary medicine.

And so, the two plus two refers to we have veterinary school classes of 30 students who spend their first two years of veterinary school here with us at Utah State University, and then our students move to Pullman, Washington for years three and four of their veterinary medical education, so their postbaccalaureate four-year DVM program. So, two years here with us at Utah State and then two years at Washington State University in Pullman, hence the two-plus-two program. They complete their Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, completing that at Washington State University.

[02:20]

So, that program started at USU in the fall of 2012, which brought me in and many other new faculty members to USU to teach in the veterinary school program. I, in parallel, did have a teaching role in the ADVS undergraduate program in horse reproduction. My expertise is horse reproduction. So, I was teaching in the ADVS undergraduate program, teaching horse reproduction in the veterinary school program, and then conducting horse reproductive research. That's what brought me to USU.

A year later, there was an administrative change within our department with our former department head, Dr. Cam White, moving into the College of Ag and Applied Sciences college, and that opened up the department head position, and I say jokingly, but I think there's some truth it of "Give it to the new guy." I had been at USU just a year when I was appointed interim department head for the Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department and then at the same time, appointed the associate dean for the current two-plus-two school of veterinary medicine.

So, that was my first administrative appointment at USU, and I continued in that dual appointment just until very recently. And earlier, just a month ago, I moved out of the position of department head for Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences, and now I am focusing solely on the school of veterinary medicine as the associate dean.

And I can give some further background if you'd like on why that change came about, but I do want to go back to formation of our current two-plus-two program. Now, prior to our current two-plus-two program, there was no in-state veterinary medical education program in Utah, and so the two-plus-two program was initiated for a primary reason of increasing the availability of opportunities for Utah residents to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. And to that end, in our class size of 30 students in each cohort within our vet school program, 20 positions are for Utah residents, and then 10 positions are reserved for nonresident students. So, 20 residents, 10 nonresidents for our class size of 30.

[04:45]

TW: So, being an administrator for ADVS, both as an associate dean and as a department head, before the Covid pandemic, do you remember some of the major initiatives or priorities that you were working on?

DV: Main things were, for the ADVS undergrad program, is just continuing to build the opportunities for both classroom training, hands-on training for students in the ADVS undergraduate students with the ADVS department offering a single BS degree, Bachelor of Science degree in Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences in one of four emphasis areas: animal and dairy science emphasis, bio-veterinary science emphasis with that being essentially our pre-veterinary curriculum, and then biotechnology for students interested in going into a career in biomedical-type avenues of research, etc., and then our fourth emphasis area, equine science and management.

So, across those emphasis areas, some of our main initiatives, I'll point out one in particular within the equine science and management emphasis area, and that was our growing recognition of growth in the use of animals for therapeutic applications with people and specifically for our equine program, using the term that was used at that time, equine-assisted activities and therapies or EAAT where having people interact with horses for therapeutic applications for people and wellness and other beneficial aspects of interacting with horses. And so, a new initiative that we started in the timeframe pre-Covid was building our equine-assisted activities and therapies program. Now, the terminology within that area of the horse industry and human health realm is equine human sciences. So, that's been a dramatic growth area within our department, is our equine human science program.

Back to more generally aspects of the undergraduate program in ADVS were continuing hands-on training opportunities with animals to augment their classroom training, but also greater course offerings. More and more of our students coming into the undergraduate Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences curriculum have an interesting companion animal, and so about five plus years ago, we initiated developing some course offerings in companion animal care and management. We now have three course offerings that we didn't have five plus years ago specifically tailored for those undergraduate students who have an interest primarily in dogs and cats, but other—the pocket pets – hamsters, those sort of animals – so a couple of things along those lines.

[07:52]

TW: So, news out of China in late 2019 of a virus that soon spread to other countries around the world and arrived in the United States late January of 2020. I'm not sure, you being an administrator for the College of Ag and Applied Science as well as department head, associate dean of ADVS and the veterinarian program, what were the initial discussions that you remember and how it impacted your faculty, your faculty's teaching, your faculty's research, and the students?

DV: And to that point, I think I'm probably not the first person to be mentioning how it just seemed to change so much overnight, that I can recall back to in early March of 2020 going on my last pre-Covid USU business trip to another collegiate institution in the intermountain west for some meetings and interactions, and that was that first 10 days of March, and to the overnight change of being on that trip at another academic institution. And suddenly, I think we, the general we just start to come to this realization of higher education, like all of society, boy, we are in for some monumental challenges and changes.

And I returned from that trip – it was March 10<sup>th</sup>, I believe – and within a day or two, and I recall the date, it was March 12<sup>th</sup>, President Cockett announced that USU instruction would go completely online. And so, then the conversation with the faculty staff of, “Okay. Here, things have changed overnight. How to we now move to this new day of transition to online instruction both for the undergraduate ADVS program, the graduate degree program in Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary sciences, and then in our school of veterinary medicine? How do we do all of that?”

**[10:06]**

Well, one little unique aspect of our veterinary school program was a couple of things. Our small class size, 30 students, and being part of a broader regional program in veterinary medicine. Initially in consultation with Dean White, Provost Galey, and President Cockett, we were given approval to continue plans to deliver face-to-face instruction in the school of veterinary medicine because of our small class size. And that week of March 12<sup>th</sup> – and it was actually the week after – we, the veterinary school program, don’t follow the USU academic calendar. We follow our regional program and veterinary academic calendar. So, the spring break for the school of veterinary medicine in the spring of 2020 was a week after the spring break at USU. So, our students, veterinary students were on their vet school spring break when the planned transition to online instruction was planning to take place on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Well, our conversation focused on small class size, we can socially distance, we can take extra precautions to potentially remain or maintain in-person instruction for the veterinary school program. Although that was initially approved by President Cockett, we soon came to the realization that even given our small class size, that was not the most proven thing to do. So, when the veterinary students were returning from spring break on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, our intent had been we will maintain face-to-face instruction. Well, leading up to the end of the week prior, we made the decision, “No, that’s not proven. Even with our small vet school class size, we will completely transition to online instruction,” so that is what we did.

**[12:09]**

So, for ADVS undergrad and graduate program and the school of veterinary medicine, it all went online in March of 2020, and all of the challenges that went along with that, both internal challenges of faculty and staff having to—and the term “pivot” became widely utilized. “Oh, now we need to pivot based on new information that’s come along.” Kudos to our faculty and staff. Everybody just rose to the occasion, and “All hands on deck. Let’s figure out what we need to do to deliver instruction online,” and we made that transition.

Was it without hiccups? No. We learned—we had students, I can personally think of some of our veterinary students in very rural areas, difficulty being able to participate in online instruction, and so how do we accommodate that? And we had students that had to go to their local library, travel to town to get to the internet at their local library, things like that. And this was all following the message from central campus, Provost Cockett, President Galey, Dean White of, “Let’s work with our students. We’re all in unprecedented circumstances. Yes, we made this transition to online instruction. How do we make it work for all involved, make it work for the faculty and staff and the students that we’re delivering this instruction to?”

So, if we had students that had circumstances where they had challenges being able to participate in remote education, we worked with them in any manner we could to make it work for them,

whether regarding just delivery of lecture material and/or taking exams, things like that. We worked to be very accommodating recognizing that there was no perfect scenario that was going to work for every student and every circumstance.

**[14:03]**

TW: Were there elements like lab work or anything that needed to be done, like animal maintenance or stuff like that that was part of—

DV: Yeah, a couple of aspects on it from the animal standpoint. I mentioned in the undergrad program, our graduate program, and then the veterinary school program, very hands on. Very hands on. On the veterinary school program, one thing that worked in our favor is in years one and two of training of veterinarians, it's by and large the preclinical training. So, it's not working with client-owned animals in a hospital setting etc., but we still worked very heavily to give our veterinary students as much hands-on training and education at our farm units as we can.

My area, horse reproduction, that spring semester, I had delivered my hands-on laboratories in horse reproduction to half of that cohort of 30 veterinary students in their spring semester of second year, but I hadn't taught those same labs to the other half of the students, and I didn't have the opportunity to do so. So, half the cohort got it, half the cohort didn't, but early enough in their education in veterinary school that we were confident, "Yes. They missed those labs in year two, but they've got time in the remaining two years of their veterinary education. There will be opportunities for those students to make up that training."

I'll say similar, almost identical on the undergrad side of that, where the decision was, "Yes. March 18<sup>th</sup>, it's all online, distanced education." No more labs that were planned out at our farm units, whether the dairy or the equine center, sheep and goat center, beef center. All of that had to be wrapped up pretty much by March 18<sup>th</sup>. There were a couple of exceptional circumstances where a little face-to-face, hands-on animal education went on beyond March 18<sup>th</sup>, but not very much.

And were there some impacts on student learning? Potentially, but what do you do in a worldwide pandemic? You do the best you can. You do the best you can for, again, the faculty, staff, and most importantly, the students. How do we do the best we can for the students impacted by the circumstances?

**[16:26]**

TW: How would you gauge the performance of the persistence of the students during that challenging spring 2020 semester?

DV: That, the students, we didn't see the students day to day, so they're off and doing remote learning. And so, I think really, I would then segue into fall of 2020, students coming back, but the pandemic still overhanging everything.

I'll again start with our small cohort of students in the veterinary school, 30 students in each class. Working with central administration, we were able to identify a classroom on campus that all 30 of our veterinarian students could be in place if they chose to all in-person instruction in the fall of 2020. Granted, though we had to make accommodations, be ready to accommodate students that might've been sick or had to quarantine, so all lecture content was being recorded

either for simultaneous delivery and/or asynchronous viewing of that material. But given our small class size, we had a room that would allow physical social distancing of the entire cohort of 30 students. But again, they didn't have to be there. It was by choice that they could be there in person.

With our undergrad program, that fall semester of 2020, I was teaching our large ADVS orientation course to over 100 students, and I had to split them into four sections. So, I had section A one day, and sections B, C, and D were tuning in remotely and had recorded lectures available, and we just did that rotation basis to allow the appropriate social distancing and minimization of exposure, things like that.

And back to—your question was really how did the students—kudos to undergrad, grad, vet students. They all said, “Yeah, nobody could've planned it, couldn't foresee it, but here we are. How do we make the best of it?” and I think that was by and large, uniformly how people approached it, just recognizing unprecedented, and we just need to figure out how to get to the next stage and the day after that and do the best we can.

**[18:55]**

TW: What about the impact on your research and your colleagues' and faculty's research that spring and summer of 2020?

DV: Yeah, major disruptions from the standpoint of having to plan. Okay, it's just not—we don't go about our job activities, in this sense, research, like we always have. We had to go through approval processes for human health and safety, and then what can be done? Is travel involved? And exposure of all of that. And so, driven centrally, for good reason, every department had to develop their operating plan for teaching, research, extension activities, so ADVS did that. We put a team together to develop, “Here is the Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences department operating plan for Covid.” And so, for research, every lab investigator had to identify, “Here's their standard protocol for operations under Covid,” and that was wrapped in with our departmental operation plan all geared towards health and safety for all personnel – faculty, staff students, any personnel, etc. – and all of that had to be factored in and accounted for.

And it impacted some programs more than others. My horse reproductive is a fairly modest research program. I utilize the horses at the USU Sam Skaggs Family Equine Education Center. My animals are right there. The personnel had to maintain their jobs of caring for the animals, feeding the animals, etc. All of our farm units at USU are operated by the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, UAES. And so, ADVS, the veterinary school programs, and myself as a research investigator, the UAES provides me with access to the animals that I need, whether for teaching or research but in this sense, research.

**[20:57]**

So, my research conducted there. We had to make sure we had plans in place of minimizing Covid exposure during our day-to-day activities with working with the horses, getting only essential personnel together at any given time, to try and social distance but when two or three people need to be around a horse to interact with that animal, can't completely social distance. So, masking, gloves, all other precautions that could be taken to minimize risk. Again, first and foremost, focusing on, “How do we do this in the safest manner for all personnel involved?”



That was my situation. Other investigators are more lab-based here on campus, and they had to go through the same process of, “How do we maintain lab activities ensuring to the degree possible safety for all individuals involved?” And other faculty involved, either in research on in extension activities, having to try, to the degree possible, try and be on the road to deliver extension programming, and so I know our extension faculty, they had to reinvent themselves. And some faculty, extension faculty I think were already moving with social media delivery of extension programming, etc., but there were other faculty that probably weren’t working in that realm from an extension standpoint, but it became essential in the face of the pandemic to develop new means of interacting with their state Covid holders and their clientele from an extension standpoint.

[22:36]

TW: Did you have to extend the tenure clock for any of the faculty in the department based on the fact that Covid were—

DV: Yes. The pre-tenure faculty at the time of Covid had – and this was driven and approved through the provost office – there was an approval process for faculty to—due to implications and impacts of Covid on their ability to do their jobs teaching, researching, and/or extension and the potential impact from a pre-tenure standpoint. Yes, there was the opportunity to add time, have an extension to the pre-tenure probationary period.

TW: What about the recruitment of veterinary and science graduate students? Was there a stumbling block because of Covid with the recruitment? Did you get 30 students the coming fall?

DV: Yes, and we never had any trouble filling our 30-student class cohort, but the process was impacted by Covid. No face-to-face interviews. And so, 2020, we had already finished our face-to-face veterinary school interviews in January, but January of 2021, it was virtual interviews, and we actually stayed with that model even through January of ’22. We stayed with that, the virtual interview process. But fortunately, and importantly, no difficulty filling our class size of 30 students.

Now, going back to the undergrad program, we did see some impacts on undergrad enrollment for that fall of ’21, fall of ’22. I think given the change in—maybe not so much those students who are close to finishing. Boy, they’re going to come back. They’re going to finish their degree. But I think there were other prospected students either who had already been matriculated students who then said, “Well, I’m going to step away from my education until things settle down a little bit,” and/or maybe students taking gap years finishing high school, “I think I’ll do a gap year, let this Covid situation sort of mitigate itself for some period of time,” so we did see an impact in enrollment in the undergraduate program that I think we’re now rebounding from.

[25:05]

TW: So, are there any other memories of that first full year of the Covid pandemic, so the fall 2020, spring 2021 that impacted the ADVS department, the veterinarian program that really come to mind? You said pivot. You said—

DV: Yeah. I think I come to the point of just again, what essentially seemed like this overnight change of, “Oh, okay. Yeah,” back to, “Yeah, there’s this virus out there,” and, “Oh, yeah,” and, “Oh, boy. Now what?” and then all the changes that came along with that. We got through it. Again,



people rallied, and I say that generally across campus, across society of, “Okay. Here’s the hand we’re dealt. Let’s make the best of it,” and I think certainly, talking about the USU community and the environment here of, “Let’s just rally. Let’s get through it,” and we did. Were there stumbling blocks and unforeseen challenges? Sure. But I think, again, using it sort of globally, departmentally, college, university-wide, yeah, I think we’ve put our best foot forward.

And on that note, I’d like to highlight some of our faculty within the ADVS department and/or the veterinary school program that the pandemic brought on obviously new challenges, but how our faculty with areas of expertise stepped up to help the USU community deal with Covid pandemic, and two specific examples is the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, a veterinary animal diagnostic laboratory was set up to take on human sample Covid testing.

[27:05]

So, our veterinarians at the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab with human medical oversight and approval and quality control, became the USU Covid testing laboratory. Our faculty in our USU Institute for Antiviral Research, the IAR, with their expertise in virology, they were on the front lines of studying the Covid virus, SARS-CoV2 virus, but they were also instrumental in the safety planning committee for USU. Those faculty, Dr. Bart Tarbet and others, they had a seat at the table with Provost Galey and his team, the safety team addressing the Covid-19 pandemic for USU.

And when we speak of USU, it’s not just Logan, USU. It’s statewide, state campuses, statewide USU. So, expertise within the department, the college, the veterinary school program brought to bear on this huge issue. And back to the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Dr. Tom Baldwin, the director of their laboratory down there of rallying to get up and running, to provide the Covid-19 samples. It’s continuing. It’s still available for testing.

TW: So, the state legislature met in January of 2021 and changed a couple things for the way that the state of Utah universities would operate. I know they mandated that face-to-face classes should be offered for 75 to 80 percent of what they had been offered in fall of 2019. They lessened the social distancing mandate. I think the mask mandate was also rescinded or at least, I know the university went to encourage mask wearing. Did any and all of these different new realities—as well as the vaccine was more readily available in the second [unclear] of the Covid pandemic. How did those things impact AVDS and the vet program?

[29:31]

DV: And that gets into the social aspect of differing views of any and all, and so we saw that. There were differing views across the spectrum, both at the student level but also faculty/staff level. And I point to our university leadership, President Cockett in particular, of navigating that. There’s no way to please everyone, but being very open in decisions that were made and how USU would move forward as the pandemic progressed as things like vaccine came online, etc.

And so, yeah. People had their varying philosophies on things, and that factored into day-to-day operations, and we made the best of it. Yeah.

TW: So, the pandemic definitely was a catalyst for change in personal lives, public lives. Utah State University I think excelled from what we’re learning from the interviews that we’ve been conducting. I’m wondering if there were any things that were changed due to Covid either

through the ADVS department or through the vet program that in the future would be things that become permanent changes to the way you operate.

**[31:08]**

DV: And I will go to things like Zoom, but I think we all suffered from some Zoom overload. But Zoom's got a great place in so that we don't necessarily need to—whether it's, “Okay, I've got a meeting down in Salt Lake. Do I drive down and contribute to poor air quality and the time, an hour plus each direction, or if the option's available, just sit right here in my office, tune in via Zoom, have the meeting and not add to a footprint from an environmental adversity standpoint?” So, I think that's—again, I don't want to do everything on Zoom like we were doing for a fair period of time in the depth of the pandemic, but I see that as an area that I think will have a lasting positive influence and both professionally and personally, family. We had family gatherings on Zoom that we'd never done before. Or pre-Zoom, what was it? Anyway...

TW: WebEx.

DV: WebEx and other things, so...

TGRW: Yeah, we do that too.

TW: How would you gauge how people came through it from a mental health standpoint – administrators, faculty, your students – short-term, long-term effects that the pandemic may have on just living through these two plus years?

DV: Yeah. No, and that's an important question of wellness, of just having our lives professionally and personally, just the upheaval that went along with that. And again, I think look at our university leadership of recognizing the challenges and encouraging people to utilize resources available, whether it's student, faculty, staff, recognizing the strain from a wellness standpoint that all of us were faced with and recognize the challenges. And very importantly, what are the resources available to help in those circumstances? And I think, again, kudos to just how faculty, staff, and students were troopers with all the upheaval associated with the pandemic.

**[33:40]**

TGRW: You've spoken broadly to the student experiences specifically with your teaching responsibilities. Do you have any specific stories without getting into names of students who particularly succeeded during the challenges circumstances or even those who fell into what some other professors would call the lost generation and the lost experiences affected them negatively?

DV: Yeah. I think the students that—I think particularly, those close to finishing their degree, and I'm now focusing primarily on the undergraduate degree students across our four emphasis areas where they were in the home stretch and by golly, they've got their eye on the ball, and “What do I need to wrap things up?” And given their circumstances, they had to go remote. So, maybe they're still here in Logan or maybe they're back home or whatever, but they're going to figure out—and we worked with those students. I can think of some circumstances where, okay, a student needs a credit here or there. How can we, through internship opportunities that maybe students were already doing and that they were planning for X number of degree credits? Well, based on the number of hours they had put into their internship, could we give them even more credit to help with the degree completion? Things like that. There were some circumstances like

that that again speak to the message from central administration of, “Let’s work with our students. Let’s figure out within reason, how can we help them be successful in this instance degree completion if they’re in that homestretch?”

And then the flipside of maybe this lost generation perspective, I can’t say that I’ve seen evidence of that, and I hope I won’t. But that year and a half, two years of spring of 2020 to current, it’s been a different experience. And again, I come back to, yeah, I think some students have stepped away from their education, but I hope most if not all will step back in, reengage with their academics, and then come to fruition with degree completion. But it’s still a work in progress.

**[36:12]**

TGRW: So, can you speak to what changes specifically? So, a student arrives at the Sam Skaggs Family Equine Center for a class. What is their experience like during Covid through that early closure to now?

DV: Yeah. That’s a good example of—so, Sam Skaggs Family Equine Education Center, spring semester of 2020, March 18<sup>th</sup>, some of the equine courses were those that, “Okay, if there’s a little bit students need to do beyond March 18<sup>th</sup> with some hands-on horse work, let’s keep moving along.” With approval from Dean White, Provost Galey, we could continue, and we did. But there was—at a point, we had to pull all hands-off education.

So, at least the students had bulk of their spring semester. By fall semester, we were, with appropriate social distancing and other mitigation measures, getting back to hands-on education at the equine education center and our other animal units. Still had to limit sometimes the class size, but being outdoors, that worked in our favor. The animal facilities, even in our big indoor arena, it’s a huge indoor arena, so it’s not like being in a smaller confine. So, that worked in our favor of being able to move back to hands-on animal activities fairly early by fall of 2020 back to hands-on activities.

TGRW: And so, looking back on all your experiences, what do you feel have been the most significant lessons for you personally and professionally to take away from all this, this moment in history?

**[38:12]**

DV: Yeah. I think just people rallying to, “Here’s our situation. How do we make the best of it?” First and foremost, all was focusing on safety for the people involved whether faculty, staff, students, community members back to things like extension activities or other community activities. How do we do things in the safest manner for all people involved? And just dealing with the unknowns of, again, that aspect of, “Okay. Well, now we need to pivot in this—we thought we were going in this direction, but now we need to do something different based on the circumstances as they arose, and it was just a progression. I think literally, quite often from day to day but yeah, week to week, month to month, as things changed, I was—throughout the pandemic, I was encouraged based on what I was hearing reported to us from central administration, is that our university safety protocols seem to be working because based on contact tracing that was being done, we were hearing that the exposures aren’t happening at USU. The mitigation procedures and safety practices that we have in place whether social distancing, masking, etc., it’s working, and it’s exposures and activities and events and interactions outside of USU.

So, I found that encouraging that boy, what we're doing is working. Let's keep doing what we're doing. It's letting us continue to do our job – so, teaching, research, extension – in the fact of all that otherwise are unknowns.

**[40:02]**

TW: Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experiences with the Covid pandemic at Utah State University?

DV: Yeah. As we wrap up, I'm glad to see the worst behind us, and I hope all of it behind us. And granted, there are still unknowns. We wonder about new variants, but I'm not a virologist. We've got the experts who are, but I think this a virus that's probably—people talk about it is or will be endemic. It's going to be like our seasonal flu that we get our seasonal flu vaccine, get our Covid vaccine, and we get our tetanus vaccine, whether it be for—so, we've been through the worst of it, I hope. We move on, we learn from it, and hopefully come to a better day.

TW: Dr. Vanderwall, I'd like to thank you for your time this afternoon discussing your experiences during the Covid pandemic at Utah State University.

DV: Well, Todd and Tameron, it's my pleasure. It's been a pleasure to visit with you and reflect back on just the tumult and just all that we've all collectively experienced over these last two years.

**[End of recording – 41:26]**