

## Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

# Suggested Categories for United States Veterinary Colleges

By Dr. Donald F. Smith

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Many prospective students have limited knowledge of the origin of individual veterinary colleges in the United States and this sometimes creates uncertainty and confusion about where to make college applications. Why do some receive government support and others not? Why do some not have large teaching hospitals? Why do some concentrate on agricultural species more than others? Why are so many located in the Midwest and South and why are not more of them in the major cities of the country?

Though some of these questions have been answered in previous stories,<sup>1,2</sup> I thought it would be helpful to suggest a nomenclature for veterinary colleges that would describe the origin and classification in a manner that brings greater clarity to understanding their similarities and differences.

The specific nomenclature for categories of colleges suggested here is modified from that which I have used before. I hope it will provide clarity regarding the types of college and give context to the establishment of private colleges in recent years, including the two colleges (Midwestern University and Lincoln Memorial University) which recently attained 'reasonable assurance' designation for anticipated future accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).<sup>3</sup>

Following is my proposed nomenclature.

### **Legacy Colleges (10):**

The Legacy designation applies to the ten colleges established between 1868 and 1916, nine of which are at land-grant institutions and most of which are still located in rural towns and small cities in their respective states. (Ohio State University in the much larger city of Columbus is the exception.) The tenth legacy school which is not part of the land-grant system was founded in association with the medical school at the private University of Pennsylvania.

Land-Grant Institutions: Auburn University, Colorado State, Cornell University, Iowa State, Kansas State, Michigan State, the Ohio State, Texas A&M, Washington State.

Private: University of Pennsylvania.

### **Post WWII Land-Grant Colleges (8):**

These colleges were established at the end of WWII (seven between 1944 and 1948) and in 1957 (Purdue University). With the exception of Tuskegee, which was established along with several historical Black colleges in the context of what is commonly referred to as the “Second Land-Grant,” the core support for this group comes from their respective states. Tuskegee’s public support, however, comes largely from the federal government.

Land-Grant Institutions: Oklahoma State, Purdue, University of California Davis, University of Georgia, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri. Second Land-Grant Act (1890): Tuskegee.

### **Modern Land-Grant Colleges (8):**

These colleges were established at land-grant institutions in the late 1960s and the 1970s and were justified on the basis of the importance of veterinary medicine to agriculture or, as in the case of those in North Carolina, Wisconsin and Florida, because they were to stand at the interface of agriculture and medicine.

Land-Grant Institutions: Louisiana State, Mississippi State (MS), North Carolina State, Oregon State, University of Florida, University of Tennessee, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Virginia-Maryland Regional CVM.

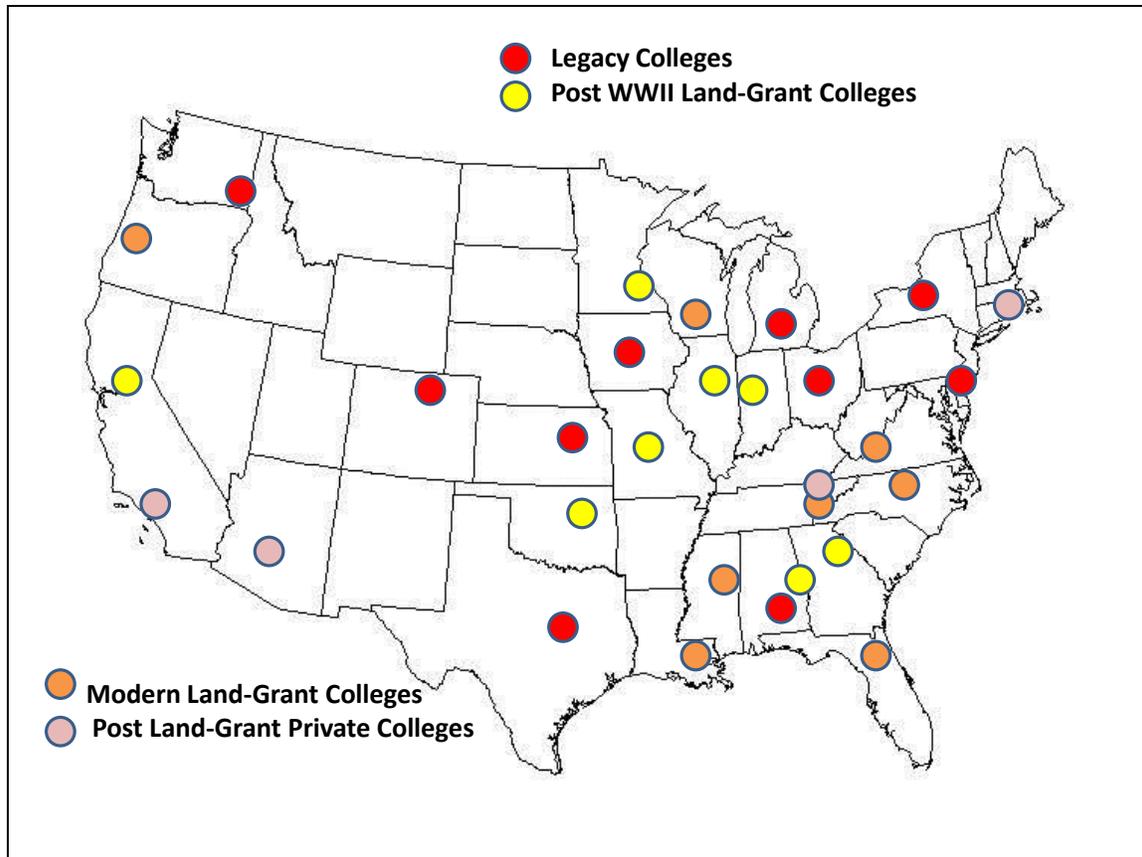
### **Post Land-Grant Private Colleges (4):**

Though it preceded the other private colleges by almost three decades, and though it receives some funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University should be considered in this cluster. Not only is it a private university, but was also founded upon the principal of one health at the urging of President Jean Mayer.

The other three private colleges emerged in southern California (1998) and more recently in Arizona and Tennessee. Western University of the Health Sciences in Pomona, California and Midwestern University in Glendale, Arizona developed veterinary colleges to complement their respective medical and applied health schools. Lincoln Memorial University, located in Harrogate (which is only 60 miles north of the land-grant campus of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville), seeks to attract and educate future veterinarians to serve the needs of rural communities throughout the US and especially the Appalachian region.<sup>4</sup>

Private Institutions: Lincoln Memorial University, Midwestern University, Tufts University, Western University of Health Sciences.

The following map identifies the locations of the 30 US veterinary colleges and schools as of August 1, 2013, and color-codes to the four suggested designations.

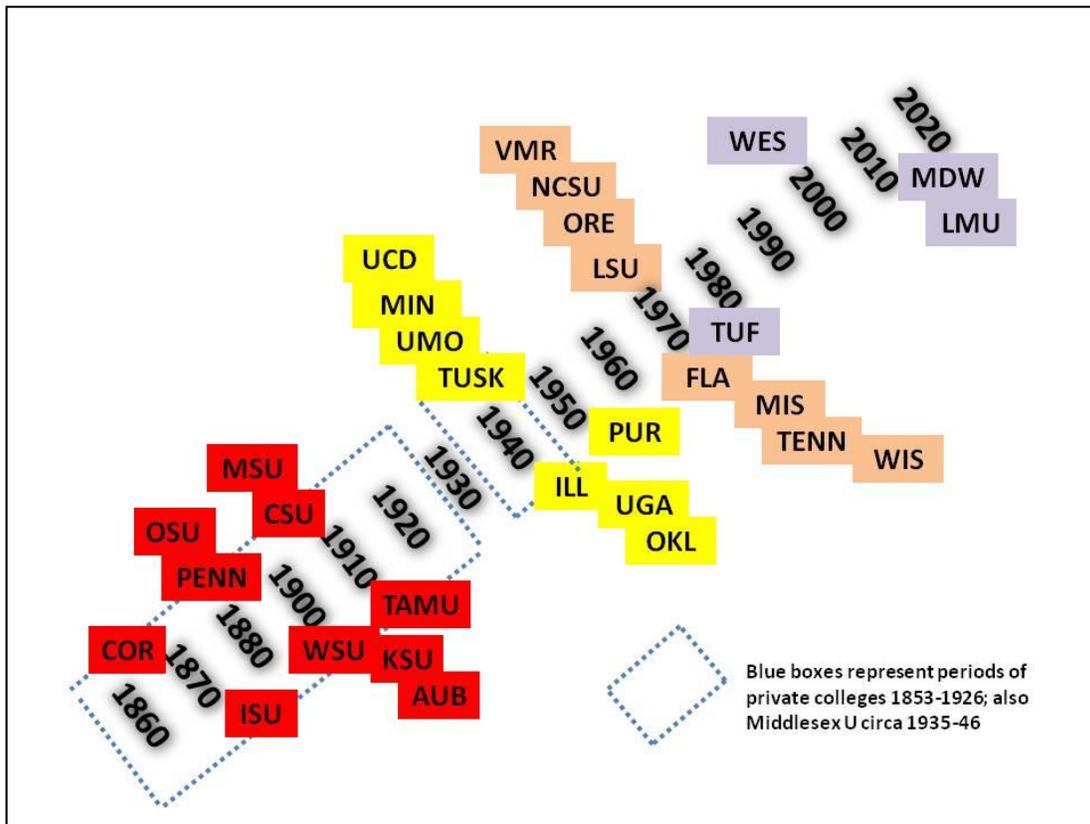


*Map Showing Locations of the 30 US Veterinary Colleges and Schools with Colored Circles Identifying the Four Categories of Colleges.*

The time line below for establishment of the 30 colleges currently operating in the US is shown below. Color-coding is consistent to that used above.

The episodic nature of establishing the clusters of colleges becomes evident in this time line, especially in the colleges that formed after WWII and those developed in the late 1960s and 1970s. The unmet need for veterinary education in the first 70 years of the profession was filled by a host of private veterinary colleges,<sup>5,6</sup> none of which survived to the present. Insufficient access to public colleges in the 1960s and early 1970s was met by students traveling to Italy, the Philippines, and occasionally other countries for a veterinary education. The Caribbean schools arose in the later years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to the unmet needs of students desiring access to a veterinary education, initially most evident in New York, New Jersey, and other northeastern states.

The recent opening of a private veterinary college in Arizona (Midwestern University) should surprise no one. Arizona had been the second most populous state without a veterinary college and the likelihood of students from the southwestern states getting a seat in a US college has been much lower than the national average for many years.<sup>7</sup>



*Time Line for Establishment of Veterinary Colleges Currently in the US.*

*Color Code: Legacy (red); Post WWII Land-Grant (Yellow); Modern Land-Grant (Light Brown); Private (Purple).*

While some states may still open colleges in land grant institutions—Arizona is considering a second college at their land-grant campus in Tucson—the pressure for future colleges will likely be in the most populous states like California, Florida, New York and Texas, states that already have veterinary programs on their land-grant campuses.

*Dr. Smith invites discussion from educators and others regarding this suggested classification of veterinary colleges.*

<sup>1</sup> The 28 Veterinary Colleges in the United States, Part I. *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine*. May 2, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The 28 Veterinary Colleges in the United States, Part II. *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine*. May 5, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Reasonable Assurance is the term used by the AVMA's Council of Education to designate colleges that have successfully submitted plans for matriculating veterinary students within three years, and are on the path towards full accreditation. [COE Accreditation Policies and Procedures: Evaluation](#), AVMA, April 2012.

<sup>4</sup> [The Emerging LMU College of Veterinary Medicine](#). Lincoln Memorial University web site.

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, Donald F. 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Veterinary Education and the Veterinary Profession in North America. *JVME* 37(4), 317-327, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> The Private Veterinary College: An Unfamiliar Model or Déjà Vu All Over Again. *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine*. August 8, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Donald F. Lessons of History in Veterinary Medicine. *JVME* 40(1), 2-11, 2013.

#### KEYWORDS::

Veterinary Colleges in the United States  
Veterinary Education  
Land-grant  
One Health  
Midwestern University  
Lincoln Memorial University  
Tuskegee University  
Private Veterinary Colleges  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

#### TOPICS:

Veterinary Colleges in the United States

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

*Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.