

Advancing the
health and welfare of
animals and humans



Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine

COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Strategic Plan

College Plan, University Vision

The strategic plan of the College of Veterinary Medicine is aligned closely with the principles and vision articulated by Cornell University in its latest strategic plan.

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Executive Summary

The Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine takes pride in its rich tradition as an innovator in veterinary education, animal disease discovery, clinical programs, and biomedical research. To continue to prepare leaders who will positively shape the profession of veterinary medicine and thus maintain a leadership position, it must creatively address the significant challenges facing academic veterinary medicine. The costs associated with providing comprehensive clinical training are rising rapidly. As private specialty practices and for-profit corporate networks expand, teaching hospitals and clinical departments – entities solely dedicated to preparing the next generation of veterinarians, researchers, academicians, and public health officials – face increasing competition for caseload and the most accomplished clinicians. Moreover, state and federal educational and research budgets will be constrained in the near term; Cornell must anticipate flat or reduced core SUNY funding and an increasingly competitive funding environment for sponsored research. These challenges require a proactive and coordinated strategy to broaden the College's financial base and efficiently focus its activities.

In December of 2007, Dean Michael Kotlikoff initiated comprehensive strategic planning in order to develop a thoughtful response to the aforementioned challenges. Separate committees were appointed to develop strategic goals and enabling strategies for each of the College's four mission areas – education, clinical service, research, and diagnostics. Committees were primarily composed of junior and senior faculty members from across specialty areas, but also included veterinary students, clinical residents, administrative personnel, alumni, veterinarians in private practice, and the Chief Veterinarian of New York State. The committees submitted their reports to the Dean in June of 2008, and open faculty meetings were held to solicit feedback. An executive steering committee of senior College administrators met over the summer and into the fall to review committee reports and integrate their recommendations into a unified document. The Associate and Assistant Deans will oversee the implementation of these initiatives. Some critical components of the plan are outlined on the following pages.

Public Mission

The College of Veterinary Medicine plays an instrumental role in fulfillment of Cornell University's formal public mission. Striving to improve the health of animals and humans through education, research and service, the College employs and educates leaders in veterinary medicine and biomedical research, who in turn advance knowledge at the interface of discovery and application. Over 19,000 patients are treated annually at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA), and an additional 38,000 through its Ambulatory and Production Medicine clinic. The College's successful and wide ranging partnerships with State and Federal agencies further demonstrate its commitment to serve the public good through continued vigilance against the spread of disease, promotion of agricultural productivity, preservation of diverse

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Effectively Address Workforce Needs in Veterinary Medicine

Veterinary Class Size

In response to projected state and national shortages in the veterinary workforce, the Dean has proposed an initiative to expand DVM class size by 30 students per year, to 116. Cornell's class size is approximately 50% smaller than that of other highly ranked colleges. This initiative would ensure Cornell's continued influence within the veterinary profession and help address critical workforce needs in New York State. The Education planning committee emphasized that incremental class size increases must be targeted toward areas of greatest workforce needs and economic impact. It is envisioned that roughly 50% of the increase in class size would be targeted toward food animal veterinarians and rural practitioners in New York State. Successful implementation of this initiative would be contingent upon securing a sufficient level of funding from New York State, in order to ensure that the quality of our programs is preserved.

Expanded Training Opportunities for Academic Veterinarians

Issues of compensation and training requirements have limited the appeal of positions in academic veterinary medicine, resulting in a shortage of the most highly qualified teachers and role models. The increasing debt burden of veterinary graduates, coupled with the rapid growth in private sector compensation for boarded specialists has limited the number of students seeking academic careers. Many residency programs provide limited exposure to research, and the prevailing culture has emphasized a graduate degree as a requisite for research training. While this is an effective path for many students, the prospect of an additional four or five years living on a modest academic stipend can be a strong deterrent even for the most academically inclined student, particularly one with significant debt. In order to address the emerging shortage of clinicians and scholars available to train the next generation of veterinarians and advance the treatment of disease, veterinary colleges must redouble their efforts to promote academic veterinary medicine by providing alternative training paths.

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species, and advancement of basic biomedical research. Expertise in animal health is shared broadly through a variety of extension and outreach programs. New knowledge generated at the College may also promote regional economic development in Central New York through technology transfer and local business start-ups.

The College has established a two-year “Cornell Clinical Fellows” postgraduate program, which provides post-residency research training, while enabling continued clinical involvement (approximately 20% time). Additionally, the College will work to significantly expand the exposure of veterinary students to clinical and basic research through the Leadership Program, the Veterinary Investigator Program, the Food Production Medicine Externship, and the Dean’s Fund for Clinical Excellence. Residents and upper level veterinary students interested in academic careers will be offered additional opportunities to participate in DVM teaching. The College will also train the next generation of veterinary diagnosticians by creating a combined 3-year residency and Masters Degree program in laboratory diagnostic sciences. Finally, the Associate Dean for Research will lead a faculty taskforce charged with evaluating and revamping all postgraduate programs, including the DVM Graduate Program and the Dual Degree DVM-PhD program.

Quality and Breadth

The College builds focused excellence in selected core programs, including Comparative Genomics, Infectious Disease Control, Reproductive Biology, and Cancer. At the same time, it maintains broad strength in a wide range of clinical and research activities. It is this balance of breadth and depth that leads to the College's consistent ranking among the very best veterinary institutions in North America. In the years to come, the College aspires to leverage its position of national leadership to positively influence the state of veterinary medicine on an international level.

Continue to Improve Preparation of Veterinary Graduates and Graduate Education

Expanded Community Practice Service (CPS)

Cornell's graduating veterinarians are nationally recognized for their strong scientific background and veterinary knowledge. In order to keep students' technical competencies on par with their intellectual base, the committee recommends expanding CPS to provide students with greater opportunities for independent primary care practice in a "real-world" setting. This goal might best be accomplished through moving the CPS to an offsite primary care clinic in the Ithaca area, which could also provide training in basic dentistry, behavior, shelter medicine, and practice management. Another alternative would involve the addition of a surgical component to the existing in-house CPS service. In collaboration with the Tompkins County SPCA and other shelter organizations, as well as local veterinarians, a Dean's task force is developing a detailed proposal for enhancing primary care training at the College.

Specialty Clinical Network

The Cornell University Hospital for Animals is increasingly serving patients with complex diseases requiring sophisticated treatments, a trend we expect to continue. The establishment of one or more small animal referral teaching practices in population centers around New York State will enable the College to add value and quality to the community and support the College's educational and clinical missions. We envision practices with the highest standards of medical care that will also provide an opportunity for regional veterinarians to participate in ongoing educational programs and allow students and residents to develop mutually beneficial relationships with area veterinarians, while minimizing competition with existing practices.

Evaluation and Integration of Graduate Programs

The organization of graduate education at Cornell University is undergoing campus-wide changes to ensure that the system reflects 21st century needs and can be sustained. At the College, several existing training programs and fund-

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Open, Collaborative, and Innovative Culture

Guided by the principles of “One Medicine” and “One Biology,” the College continues to strengthen translational linkages between molecular and organismal biomedical specialists, and their colleagues in clinical medicine and diagnostic science. Cooperation of this type promotes the emergence of new fields of study and the development of new treatments. The College draws on the unique resources of this great university by building interdisciplinary bridges with other units at Cornell, including Weill Medical College. The intellectual vitality and openness of our community is enriched by vigorous initiatives to enhance ethnic, cultural, gender, and socioeconomic diversity at all levels.

ing processes will be reassessed and modified as needed to ensure they are in line with the College’s mission and will stimulate additional successful applications for Institutional Training Grants. Efforts will continue to obtain first-year fellowships and other forms of tuition relief from the University. The College is also developing a new Web portal to graduate programs in Biological and Biomedical Sciences, which will be organized by research interests and projects, rather than the Cornell-specific system of Graduate Fields. It is expected that the development of this portal, along with other improvements in University-wide recruitment outreach and application processes, will further strengthen applicant pools for graduate programs at the College.

International and Statewide Presence

The College continually works to strengthen already dynamic partnerships with New York State and Federal regulatory agencies and state and regional professional organizations. In order to raise the profile and practice of veterinary medicine in other parts of the world, the College explores avenues for global engagement, including partnerships in international wildlife conservation and assistance with international animal health programs. The College has established formal faculty and student exchange agreements with several foreign veterinary colleges and is currently in negotiations with the Qatar Foundation regarding development of a Cornell Veterinary Program in the State of Qatar. The College also conducts diverse extension activities in New York State and promotes broad dissemination of the

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Continue to Build National Recognition and Financial Health of Clinical Programs

Marketing of Clinical Signature Programs

A strong caseload is the lifeblood of the teaching hospital, which will face increasing competition from large specialty referral practices in the future. Leading clinical programs at the College must aggressively promote themselves as “Centers of Excellence” for innovative patient care. In turn, the College will provide web, print, and organizational support for these efforts. The Hospital will develop and implement annual marketing plans, beginning with the 2010 academic year, emphasizing the overall depth and breadth of the services offered and specifically targeting particularly strong services, including Orthopedic Surgery (large and small animal), Oncology, and Pain Medicine, Equine Athletic Performance, and Dairy Production Medicine. Under the leadership of a new Hospital Director, the CUHA will also seek to further enhance customer service and client communication.

Specialty Clinical Network

The establishment of a clinical network of specialty teaching practices will reinforce the Cornell brand in additional markets and extend the reach of our superb clinical services, benefiting more patients and clients across the State. A mutually beneficial scenario, we expect that this expanded reach will generate a significant stream of service-fee revenue for the Hospital, increase the referral base to the CUHA for treatment and clinical research, and create a heightened awareness of the College’s impact among those who are financially able to help the College realize its mission.

latest veterinary knowledge through conferences and online programs, such as Partners in Animal Health.

Further Develop Basic and Clinical Research Programs and Promote Translational Linkages

Core Research Programs

The College will organize and build strength in four critical research areas to advance the treatment of disease. We expect that these areas will be of interest to external funding agencies, the public, and potential research collaborators –within the College, throughout the University, and across the global research community. Targeted hires and mechanisms that support seed funding for collaborative, multi-investigator projects are expected to produce successful applications for training grants, program grants, and center funding. The critical research areas have been identified as follows:

- o Infectious Disease Control
- o Comparative Genomics
- o Comparative Reproductive Medicine
- o Cancer Research

Translational and Clinical Research

A recurring theme throughout strategic planning was the importance of fostering productive collaboration between clinical investigators and basic scientists at the interface of discovery and application. As a college of veterinary medicine, Cornell is uniquely positioned to make significant contributions in this area. Clinical faculty members called for further development of College physical and administrative infrastructure dedicated to clinical studies, and diagnosticians expressed their desire to partner more closely with basic scientists on infectious disease research and the commercialization of new tests. A Clinical Research Oversight Committee is currently examining ways to effectively leverage existing resources in order to facilitate clinical investigation at the College. The expansion of funding for animal disease research and the establishment of a clinical research center will be pursued as major development priorities.

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Influence Animal Health Worldwide

International Programs

The College will seek opportunities to improve the profile and practice of veteri-
nary medicine on a global basis and to enhance the College's international profile
through key partnerships. For example, the College is currently exploring options
with the Qatar Foundation to establish a comprehensive program in veterinary
medicine in Doha, Qatar, which would build upon the recent success of the Weill
Cornell Medical College joint venture in Qatar. Through programs in research,
education, and outreach, the Cornell Veterinary Program - Qatar would mark-
edly enhance the delivery of animal health care in Qatar, sustain and improve the
status of regional wildlife populations in Qatar and the Gulf region, improve the
regional capacity to detect and control infectious disease, elevate the skills and ca-
pacity of the veterinary profession, and advance the understanding of animal and
human disease. Other international partnerships are alos being explored.

College-Wide Priorities

Diversity and Climate

The College will continue in its efforts to foster an inclusive climate based on mutual respect, where every member is encouraged and supported to succeed to their maximum potential. In addition to articulating this broad principle, the strategic plan includes specific initiatives to address the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students, as well as outreach to those communities.

Fiscal Health and Operational Efficiency

A number of institutional priorities and supporting strategies were identified related to budget and finance, information technology, communications, and alumni affairs and development. These objectives include balancing the budget and reducing prior years' deficits, strategic planning for information technology to address outstanding issues and support new initiatives, development of an effective communications program, including a comprehensive redesign of the CVM website, and the integration of development priorities and communications across units.



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