

**School of Veterinary Medicine  
Assessment Summary  
2006-2007**

**1. “Has your school/college assessment plan been updated in the past year?”**

Our overall assessment plan in the School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) has not changed in the past year. It remains structured on a blend of activities to meet the requirements of our national accreditation program for the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree program from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Council on Education (COE), and data desired internally for programmatic review and revision. AVMA COE reaccreditation occurs on a seven year cycle. Our School’s reaccreditation review will occur in 2008. (Note: the AVMA COE guidelines related to outcomes assessment for reaccreditation were substantially strengthened in September, 2006, particularly as related to assessment of clinical competencies, and we are actively implementing new programs to satisfy those requirements – see section 4 below.)

**2. “Describe any assessment activities conducted in the school/college for unit-wide programmatic or curricular review.”**

**DVM Degree Program Assessment**

The DVM degree program is a major focus of unit-wide assessment in the SVM. A variety of assessment methods are used to continually reassess our DVM program. These methods, the data generated from these assessments, and examples of curricular change driven from the analysis of these data are outlined in the information presented below, extracted from our yearly interim reaccreditation report submitted to the AVMA in December, 2006.

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**Student outcomes**

**Assessments of graduating seniors**

We collect information from graduating seniors via an exit questionnaire. This survey has been consistently used on an annual basis for many years. For the May, 2007 survey of the class of 2007 DVM graduates, the survey was updated and expanded to include additional questions, and each question was annotated to specific AVMA COE standards. The survey probes student satisfaction with 44 aspects of their DVM program experience (scored on a scale of 1 [strongly disagree] to 5 [strongly agree], including (but not limited to) assessments of overall quality of instruction, educational preparation in specific academic areas, student services, career preparation, problem-solving, communication skills, ethical decision making, etc. The students also respond to 12 free-response questions to assess specific strengths and weaknesses of the program. The feedback from the graduates is considered and addressed in reviews of the curriculum by the Curriculum Committee and within individual departments.

Data from the Class of 2007 exit survey are pending. However, we achieved a 93% survey return rate among our 2006 graduates. If responses of Agree (score = 4) or Strongly agree (score = 5) are considered in aggregate, the survey revealed that 97% of our graduates felt that the DVM program provides high quality classroom instruction, 87% felt that the program provides high quality clinical instruction, 85% felt that the program adequately prepared them for the NAVLE, 86% felt we expanded their problem solving skills, 74% felt we provided opportunities to learn effective communication skills, and 83% felt that we promote team-learning and team-building skills.

Graduates indicated a desire for the program to further enhance student finance and business skills, increase access to information about careers, and increased support in seeking and negotiating employment. We have required participation by our students in a Professional Skills course since 2002 and continue to adjust this educational offering to help address these issues. Consequently, the course includes ten two hour periods devoted to preparing the student for seeking employment in the profession, with a predominant emphasis on private general practice. In the first session, the course enlists the perspective of a recent graduate veterinarian to share his/her experience in the transition from the classroom to the exam room. In the second session, the AVMA PLIT offers advice on mitigating risk as a small business person. The third session involves the preparation of a resume and cover letter, along with insight into the interview process. The fourth class meeting, focused on a view of the profession from the new graduate's perspective, is led by an Executive Account Administrator from industry, with communication and team work receiving particular emphasis. The initial four sessions prepare the student for session five, which entails defining themselves professionally, personal goal setting within the profession and the impact their revenue generation has on personal salary. Session six provides the expertise of a team of attorneys, with long experience in the veterinary profession, regarding wills, contract law, animal law and corporate law. Session seven discusses the many and varied aspects of a career in veterinary medicine, with a review of business culture, hierarchy, types of ownership, communication, ethics, and profitability. The goal for this session is to prepare the student to combine intuition with appropriate questioning during the interview to gain knowledge of the business, resulting in good decisions regarding job opportunities. The eighth session is spent learning to evaluate a business based on a balance sheet and financial statement, with the Practice of Excellence as described by Wutchiett, Tumblin and Associates used as a guideline. Extensive discussion is given to business profit in that it provides financial freedom for a business to further invest in human resources, technology and/or facilities to improve client and patient service. The ninth session considers business inventory and accounts receivable from the perspective of the effect that proper management has on the health of the practice business. During session nine, the students interact with a certified financial advisor in the discussion of personal finance. Student debt management, early investment into a balanced portfolio, living wills and preparation for retirement are key points of the dialogue. Session ten of the course allows the students to meet with a panel of veterinarians from industry, government, academia,

specialty and general practice. The panel discusses their individual role in veterinary medicine and fields questions in a mock interview format. These 20 hours of contact time immediately precede orientation to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital and the fourth, clinical year.

In addition to formal courses, the faculty and the Office of Academic Affairs regularly mentor students in aspects of employment.

#### **Assessments of alumni at some post-graduation point**

Formal assessments were not conducted with alumni this past year. However, alumni were surveyed in 2001 and 2004, and plans are being developed for a new system of alumni assessment (see assessments of employers below, and section 4 below).

#### **Assessments of employers of graduates to determine satisfaction with the graduates**

Over 50% of our graduates remain in Wisconsin, and we routinely seek and receive informal feedback from their employer veterinarians. Formal assessments from employers of our graduates were not solicited in the past year. We plan in 2007 to initiate a new process to gather such assessments, combining mechanisms such as round-table/focus groups linked to Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association meetings and email and/or web-based surveys for both WI and out-of-state employers (see section 4 below).

#### **Assessments of faculty (and other instructors, for example interns and residents) related to such subjects as adequacy of clinical resources, facilities and equipment, library and information resources, etc.**

Input from faculty and staff is solicited at a number of times and at multiple levels throughout the year, at levels ranging from within departments, to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH), the SVM, and the campus. For example, the UW-Madison annually issues a request for proposals for teaching laboratory modernization funds. The SVM Office of Academic Affairs follows that notice by gathering input from faculty and staff regarding the priority needs of the SVM that should form the basis of a proposal to this campus program. Similarly, faculty are solicited at the departmental level for equipment items or other needs that might qualify as a target for department budget support or as a target for the use of indirect cost returns, whether at the departmental level or as an “off the top” item for the SVM. VMTH administrators use input from clinical faculty to develop a “wish list” of equipment items to be considered for either direct VMTH purchase or to be listed as priority targets for donors in our regular communications newsletter “On Call” that goes to donors and friends of the SVM. The campus library system solicits input from faculty regarding journal acquisitions or deletions, and the Steenbock Library includes an SVM faculty member on their advisory committee. The foregoing are examples of multiple opportunities for faculty to note areas they would like to see enhanced.

#### **Preparedness of students entering phases of education**

Student preparedness to enter sequential phases of the program is an inherent part of the student evaluation/grading processes in each course/clinical rotation/other educational opportunity. Furthermore, student academic progress, including issues of inadequate performance and preparedness, is assessed by the School's Educational Policy Committee (EPC). The charge to this committee is: *The EPC shall develop, and recommend to the faculty for approval, policies governing grading, standards for promotion and graduation of students, standards of student conduct, student grievances, student dismissal and other matters related to student involvement in school programs as the need arises. The EPC shall meet at least twice each year to review the academic progress of all students, and shall convey its decisions on promotion, dismissal or other appropriate actions to the Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine for communication to the students. The EPC shall prepare a report to the faculty each semester.*@

### **Additional assessment that might assist the college in benchmarking its educational program**

The SVM continues to review its academic programs and make appropriate changes on an ongoing basis. Included in our assessment processes are feedback from current students, graduate alumni, faculty, ambulatory practice/externship/preceptorship/directed study mentors, and graduate employers. The following are examples of these outcomes assessment mechanisms.

- Use of case studies to assess student progress in critical thinking and problem solving (specific examples include case-studies in the Fundamental Principles of Anatomy course in year 1, and in the Recitation in Infectious Disease Pathobiology and Veterinary Immunology courses in year 2)
- Assessment of teaching through student evaluations and peer reviews
- Departmental retreats dedicated to discussion of teaching and learning issues
- Assessment of student team building skills in the laboratory portion of the Fundamental Principles of Anatomy course (year 1, semester 1), following upon the goals set during first year student orientation.
- Assessment of student skills in laboratories
- Evaluation of student performance on externships/preceptorships/directed studies from professionals outside the School (see below)
- Feedback from fourth year students after completing the NAVLE, informally collected by faculty, and formally collected by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs via a written survey administered to students shortly after they sit for the exam
- Assessment of students by our ambulatory practitioners (see below)
- Student feedback to the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Student Liaison Committee (The latter is particularly able to mediate very rapid responses to student concerns that arise in monthly meetings of faculty representing each department and student representatives of each class in the DVM program.)
- Assessment of student learning as demonstrated in clinical rotations (see Significant

Program Changes section below)

- Surveys of alumni by the Wisconsin Alumni Association to ascertain a variety of types of alumni interest, but also pertaining to preferences on program delivery, e.g., comparative preferences for in-person versus distance education technology for delivery of continuing education.
- Departmental review of courses on a rotating basis (see below and Significant Program Changes section below)

### **Assessment of students by private-practice ambulatory program adjunct faculty**

Our students are required to complete ambulatory rotations outside the SVM under the mentorship of private practice adjunct faculty. These adjunct faculty provide us with outside evaluator views of our students in two forms. First, they score each student whom they mentor using an evaluation tool that assesses a variety of attributes, including, but not limited to, history-taking, physical exam skills, technical skills and factors of professionalism, as well as thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills. Additionally, we periodically interview the ambulatory faculty to obtain assessments of our student's performances more generally. In 2006, Dr. Sheila McGuirk from the Department of Medical Sciences and Director of our ambulatory program, conducted a round-table meeting of the ambulatory practitioners to seek further input on the performance of our students. The data gathered led to substantial and specific changes in the format of the ambulatory experience. (see Significant Program Changes section below)

The information we receive from assessment projects like this are addressed by the faculty within appropriate academic departments and the Curriculum Committee to determine how the curriculum should respond to the feedback.

### **Assessment of students by externship/preceptorship/directed studies mentors from outside the SVM**

Our students pursue a wide range of externships, preceptorships and/or directed studies outside the SVM as part of the fourth year in the DVM curriculum. Upon completion of each such experience, the students are evaluated by their external experience mentor in 20 areas of academic and technical proficiencies, professionalism, problem-solving and communication skills, and ethical conduct. In cases in which substantial deficiencies are identified, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and/or the student's faculty advisor review the evaluations, speak with the external mentor by phone, and meet with the student. In so doing, we have an opportunity to address both deficiencies specific to an individual student and to observe/identify trends in unacceptable performance across our student body. These issues could then be directed to the appropriate departments and/or Curriculum Committee and drive revisions in our teaching program.

### **Departmental review of courses on an on-going basis**

The SVM departments have always reviewed courses based on feedback from student evaluations. Over the years, numerous courses have been changed in response to this feedback, both in subtle ways to fine tune already excellent courses, and in more dramatic forms of course re-organizations to address student concerns or evolving curricular needs. An example of the later is the re-organization in the past year of our biochemistry course, leading to a course devoted more broadly to molecular medicine. (Details of this change are outlined in the Significant Program Changes section below.)

To further enhance the departmental review process, the Department of Pathobiological Sciences, working in conjunction with the Curriculum Committee, has designed and will pilot a new process for regular and repeated peer-review of courses. This process was initiated in part as a direct response to discussions in the Faculty-Student Liaison Committee regarding Aclosing-the-loop@ between student evaluations of courses and the implementation of appropriate course changes. Under this program, each course in the department will be exhaustively reviewed by a subset of departmental faculty every three years, such that each course will ideally be reviewed twice in any one 7 year AVMA reaccreditation cycle. (Details of this process are outlined below in the Significant Program Changes section.)

### **Progress on implementation of an overall curricular assessment plan**

In 2004, the faculty of the SVM approved a comprehensive statement of ten ACurricular Definitions, Values and Goals.@ In 2006, the Curriculum Committee, working with the Associate Dean for Academic of Affairs and SVM faculty, developed a draft plan in which the various measures of assessment outlined above, as well as potential new assessment procedures, were linked to each curricular goal and to plans for how the information obtained will be disseminated and used to drive curricular change. This is an on-going project, but successes to date are reflected by the new electronic fourth year clinical rotation evaluation system, the new model for regular review of departmental courses, and the re-organization of the biochemistry curriculum. (See the Significant Program Changes section below)

### **Describe how the college evaluates progress in meeting its mission (for example, benchmarking with other institutions, etc.)**

**Educational mission** - “Benchmarking” is done with regard to a variety of student performance measures, including pass rates on the national board examination and evaluations of our graduates by national practice organizations. In addition, benchmarking happens within national studies and trends, an example being the increased emphasis over several years toward those bodies of skills, knowledge, aptitudes, and attitudes that correlate highly with success in the profession. Important benchmarking and inter-institutional sharing of innovations and best practices also occurs at an informal level. For example, the Associate Deans for Academic Affairs meet at least annually through the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) to discuss

issues and successful approaches, which are then often emulated or tested elsewhere. At the faculty level, substantially similar information sharing occurs within disciplines at major meetings of their specialties, e.g., ACVIM meeting. Again, the knowledge sharing at these meetings is important, but the informal sharing of issues and ideas by email and telephone that occurs as a result of that networking is likely of greater overall significance.

Benchmarking of courses and programs within the SVM curriculum and individual courses also occurs from the perspective of time and trends. Faculty, as well as department chairpersons, look closely at student suggestions, input, and evaluations, and make changes based on the trends of those evaluative comments they receive over time.

**Research** - The UW-Madison as a campus records, monitors, and shares data on research performance as a campus, but also subdivides those data not only by individual schools and colleges but by departments. Consequently, the SVM receives, by email, a Monthly Extramural Support Report that lists extramural funding data by school/college and by individual departments within that school. In addition to the current month data, each report also indicates year-to-date data, the prior year-to-date data, and the percentage change. Funding is also subdivided by agency source and by the fund designation for purposes of campus grants accounting. We find this process of tracking and benchmarking our performance in comparison to other campus units to be highly credible within the SVM as well as with campus administration.

**Describe outcomes assessed for college activities that are meaningful for the overall educational processes (for example, scholarly activity of the faculty, faculty awards, faculty and staff perception of teaching resources, student satisfaction with the educational program, teaching improvement benchmarks, and others). If your program assesses other outcomes, briefly describe the results.**

#### **Assessment of faculty:**

**By department** - Each department conducts detailed evaluations of the performance of each individual faculty member. That process begins with the faculty member providing a report of their activities and accomplishments, in all areas of assignment, during the previous year. That performance is then evaluated by the department, typically as a joint process of the Executive Committee (tenured department faculty) and the chair, and that evaluation then translates to formal recommendations to the faculty member for the forthcoming year. In addition, those evaluations are used to determine merit as a basis for allocating the funds available in a given year for salary raises.

**By VMTH** – In 2004, the VMTH instituted an annual process of assessment and feedback of specified aspects of performance of individual clinicians (faculty, residents) by VMTH staff. In addition, the VMTH maintains a counterpart process of annual assessment and feedback of specified aspects of performance of individual VMTH staff by SVM clinicians (faculty,

residents).

**Describe any significant program changes (especially curriculum) that have resulted from the knowledge the college gained from carrying out outcome assessments.**

The SVM Curriculum Committee and academic departments share responsibility for incorporating assessment data into the review of teaching and curricular content. The departments use student and faculty feedback to work with faculty on continuing to improve the instruction of individual courses. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for representing the faculty in a continuing review of the curriculum as a whole. The Faculty-Student Liaison Committee contributes feedback on the curriculum and other student-faculty interaction issues to both the departments and the Curriculum Committee.

Our DVM curriculum reflects many changes over the years in response to faculty and student evaluations. Recent examples are outlined below.

- In response to student requests for access to study materials at home and technology-enhanced learning opportunities, faculty have continued to add web-based educational materials (and in some cases web-based course evaluations, e.g. orthopedic surgery) in a variety of courses/subject areas during the past year. Specific examples include courses in pathology, bacteriology, virology, regulatory veterinary medicine and public health, radiology, orthopedic surgery, swine medicine, epidemiology, and toxicology.
- Our previously offered Veterinary Biochemistry course in year 1 of our DVM curriculum was completely restructured during the past academic year to create a new course entitled Molecular and Metabolic Basis of Disease. The factors driving this change were the explosion of knowledge in molecular biology and cell biology in recent years, feedback from students that topics were disjointed in the existing flow of information, feedback from faculty that cellular and molecular biology were under-served in our overall DVM curriculum, and a desire to see that our students are optimally prepared to apply molecular biology knowledge to practical contemporary medical issues. The new molecular medicine course contains expanded discussions of the application of topics such as signal transduction and gene regulation to disease processes such as oncogenesis, neurodegeneration, infection/inflammation, etc., plus new lectures on emerging topics of biotechnology, gene therapy, siRNAs, and stem cell technology.
- Our Veterinary Histology course has been evolving over the past 5 years. During the most recent year, in response to student feedback and personnel changes in the course, 11 lecture topics were modified.
- Dr. McGuirk's round-table discussion with our ambulatory program adjunct faculty (see above) highlighted the program practitioners' concerns about a lack of student understanding of herd-level disease and treatment protocols, and certain business management issues. Changes have been implemented already in direct response to these assessments. Specifically, in place of the previous requirement for students to write up three medicine, three surgery, and three theriogenology cases of interest during their

ambulatory rotation, they are now required to pick two farms in the practice and summarize each farm's diagnosis and treatment protocols for the seven most common diseases of fresh cows in the sick pens, including an inventory of the farm's medicine room as it relates to the treatment protocols employed. This exercise is viewed as mutually beneficial to both the students and the practices/farms. In addition, the students must now also discuss two practice management issues of interest with the ambulatory practitioner, and write short essays about each.

- The Food Animal Production Medicine (FAPM) section has renamed their rotation offerings to better clarify rotation contents. Furthermore, two rotations have been combined into one because, as the rotations were taught, an opportunity was identified to refine each and re-focus rotation objectives.
- The large animal surgery course instructors have, in response to student feedback, begun to provide streaming video copies of lectures to better allow students to review concepts and materials presented in class.
  
- A new model for departmental-level on-going curricular review - The Department of Pathobiological Sciences, working in conjunction with the Curriculum Committee, has designed and will soon pilot a new process for regular and repeated peer-review of courses in the DVM curriculum. Under this program, each course in the department will be reviewed by a subset of departmental faculty every three years, such that each course will ideally be reviewed twice in any one 7 year AVMA accreditation cycle. The goals of the process are to:
  - insure that course contents remain appropriate as advances and changes occur within related fields of study
  - insure that quality of instruction is maintained at a high level
  - insure that recommended changes (from course evaluations provided by students and/or peer reviews) are implemented
  - provide a reporting system to the SVM Curriculum Committee
  - Course reviews will be conducted by a panel of three departmental faculty members, serving on a rotating yearly basis. These individuals will review multiple forms of data in their evaluation of each course (course syllabus, course notes, web-based instructional materials, student evaluations of the course and instructor, classroom peer reviews, and the course coordinator's written self-assessment of the course's successes and weaknesses over the past 3 years). When necessary, outside content experts will also be employed. The outcome of the review will be a written summary provided to the course coordinator, the department chairperson and executive committee, and the SVM Curriculum Committee.
  
- Implementation of an electronic clinical rotation evaluation system - In response to concerns that evaluation of fourth year rotations in the VMTH was inefficient and incomplete, the Office of Academic Affairs and the Curriculum Committee sought, and

were successful in receiving, a grant from the UW-Madison Assessment Council to use technology to enhance evaluation of our fourth year clinical rotations. This process will proceed in three stages. The first has moved the previously used paper form by which clinicians assessed and graded fourth year students to a computerized system (began January 2007). This will not only expedite the assessment and grading of students, but also improve our ability to evaluate and summarize the data captured. The second phase will be to implement a computerized process by which the students can evaluate their learning experiences on clinical rotations. Finally, in the third phase, the process will be expanded to function as a capstone mechanism by which we are able to assess the preparation of our students during years 1-3 of the curriculum for their fourth year clinical rotations.

**Programs initiated in response to a combination of assessment feedback and/or identified national/campus needs:**

- MPH program - The SVM has been a very active partner with the School of Medicine and Public Health to create a new MPH program on the UW-Madison campus (<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/MPH/>). The program was launched in August 2005 with 28 students, and graduated its first MPH candidates in August 2006. Among those first students were two recent DVM graduates from our SVM and, at the time, two VM3/4 students. The later students in the inaugural class participated by simply taking leaves of absence from the DVM program. However, in 2007 a dual DVM-MPH program was approved by the UW-Madison campus. This program formalizes the ability of students to complete both the DVM and MPH degrees within a five year period, even under the new CEPH accreditation guidelines for MPH degrees that stipulate a minimum of 42 credits in an MPH program. Development of the dual DVM-MPH degree program reflects the substantial increase in our students' interests in careers that merge veterinary medicine and public health. This interest is further reflected by the fact that SVM students have recently launched (November, 2006) a new public and global health interest group club, and by the fact that the UW-Madison SVM had the second largest attendance at the January 23, 2006 ADay at CDC for Veterinary Students@ in Atlanta, GA.
- Center for Global Health - The SVM has been a strong partner with the UW-Madison Schools of Medicine & Public Health, Pharmacy, and Nursing, and the Division of International Studies, in the creation of the UW-Madison Center for Global Health (<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/gh/>). This Center applies interprofessional as well as interdisciplinary team-based approaches to problems of global health. Veterinary students and SVM faculty have been actively involved in Center-sponsored interdisciplinary summer educational programs in Ecuador over the past 5 years, and SVM faculty have also partnered with colleagues from the Schools of Medicine and Public Health and Pharmacy to launch (spring and summer, 2007) new on-campus and field courses related to tropical public health issues in Thailand. Finally, for the 2006/2007 academic year, the Center for Global Health initiated a new Certificate in

Global Health program for health professional and graduate students at UW-Madison. Among the inaugural class of 26 certificate candidates are 4 current SVM students, as well as one graduate veterinarian.

- Increased opportunities for student research experiences: The SVM holds a AT32@ award from the NIH-NCCR that provides stipend support for veterinary students so they can obtain a 12-month mentored research experience. This program complements a Merck-Merial Scholars summer research program already held by the SVM.
- Research training program for under-represented minorities: An industry partnership has been developed to provide funding to a fourth-year African-American veterinary student who will pursue the PhD degree following receipt of the DVM degree. This funding provides full support (tuition plus salary stipend) for the remaining year of the DVM program plus the full period of the PhD program. Two students have been entered into this program to date.

### **Briefly describe your plans for collecting clinical competencies**

Our method for collecting and assessing clinical competencies has historically been embedded in the evaluation of fourth year students in externships/preceptorships and ambulatory rotations outside the SVM, and in their clinical rotations within the VMTH. Regarding the latter, as described above in the Significant Program Changes section, the Curriculum Committee, Office of Academic Affairs, and SVM faculty are working together to expand a new system that uses technology to enhance evaluation of our fourth year clinical rotations. This process will allow us to more readily track a student's progress over the year and, on a larger scale, it will allow us to better identify student competencies and weaknesses and Aclose the assessment loop,@ such that assessment findings more efficiently drive curricular change. (See section 4 below for additional information regarding new, additional clinical competencies assessment planning.)

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### **Graduate Research Program Assessment**

The **Comparative Biomedical Science (CBMS)** graduate program in the School of Veterinary Medicine is administered by the Department of Pathobiological Sciences (PBS). The CBMS Graduate Program was last reviewed by the Graduate School in Sept. 2000 (then known as the Veterinary Science graduate program and administered by the Dept of Animal Health and Biomedical Sciences).

The 2000 review of the CBMS by the Graduate School delineated many strengths of the program and pointed out areas for improvement. Both are outlined below as a report from CBMS:

The strengths of our program include good research projects, funding, space and training. Our

students get many opportunities to mature in their research through seminars, participation in local, national and international scientific meetings. They are also provided opportunities and guidance in writing research proposals. Our students also are appropriately placed in postdoctoral fellowships or employed following graduation. The morale of our students is excellent.

For opportunities for improvement, the points made by the review committee are listed and immediately followed by our progress towards meeting the committee's suggestions and recommendations.

- 1) The School of Veterinary Medicine should take a more active role in sponsoring the CBMS graduate program. Although the governance of the CBMS Graduate Program has been distributed to all four departments in the School of Veterinary Medicine, financial support for several high priority initiatives from the representative departments and the SVM have not been realized:
  - a) funds for graduate student rotations
  - b) travel funds for special research projects/training
  - c) student research awards
    - Support for the CBMS program is primarily funding for research assistantships (RAs), supplementing graduate RA support from private and public grant sources. Unfortunately, due to significant cuts in state GPR funding to the University, the number of SVM-supported RAships has decreased.
    - The Academic Committee of the CBMS graduate program has recently initiated contacts with the Wisconsin Alumni Foundation to develop sources of funding for graduate student rotations, travel awards and outstanding student awards. Development brochures are currently being designed and the first mailing to the program's alumni will be sent in the fall of 2007.
- 2) There is a need for a formal orientation for new graduate students in the program.
  - Currently, Dr. Aiken, chair of the Academic Committee, meets informally with the incoming students early in the fall semester to discuss the requirements and expectations of the graduate program. Dr. McKenzie, coordinator of the graduate program, meets with each new graduate student individually to address any questions or concerns that they have regarding the program. A more formal orientation is being planned for the fall of 2007.
- 3) There is a need to advertise the program and recruit more aggressively to enhance the applicant pool.
  - In 2004, the name of the graduate program was changed from Veterinary Science to Comparative Biomedical Sciences to more adequately reflect the research programs of our faculty trainers. Informal surveys suggested that many prospective students confused the Veterinary Science graduate degree with the DVM program. We have also eliminated the requirement of a Masters degree prior to admission into the PhD program, making the CBMS program more competitive in attracting high quality applicants, as many of the top level

graduate programs both on campus and nationwide have the “direct to PhD” track. The website of the CBMS program has been revamped to make it more user friendly and easier to keep current. New links have been added to the home page of the School of Veterinary Medicine, making it easier for prospective students to find information regarding the graduate program.

- The new training grants (Research Training for Veterinary Students and Graduate Training for Veterinarian Training) will provide higher visibility for our graduate program as well as enhance our applicant pool.
- 4) There is a need to set aside funds for student recruitment visits.
- The CBMS grad program has continued to be successful in competing for UW-Madison campus student recruitment funds. Last year (2006-2007) the program was awarded approximately \$12,000 for recruitment purposes. Five students visited our program this spring. All were interested in specific research programs within our graduate program. The majority of these students were on campus on the same day, and began their day with a breakfast orientation session hosted by our program chair. The students then met individually with faculty trainers with whom they were interested in working or who were identified by the trainers as potential students for their laboratories. A pizza lunch was also held to provide an opportunity for the prospective students to meet with the current graduate students. Prospective students were housed in hotels and hosted by faculty and students in the program. We are pleased to report that all five students who visited will be joining our program this fall
- 5) Steps need to be taken to develop training grant applications to improve the quality of the applicant pool.
- Four of the faculty trainers in the CBMS grad program are PIs of training grants and many of our trainers are affiliated with these and other training grants on campus. The training grants directed by CBMS faculty include: Cellular and Molecular Parasitology Training Grant (PI Tim Yoshino, trainer in CBMS Graduate Program), Neurobiology Training Grant (PI Gordon Mitchell, Chair of Comparative Biosciences, trainer in the CBMS Graduate Program), Research Training for Veterinary Students (PI Dale Bjorling, Chair of Surgical Sciences, trainer in the CBMS Graduate Program, member of the CBMS Academic Committee) and Graduate Training for Veterinarian Training Grant (PI Charles Czuprynski, trainer in the CBMS Graduate Program, member of the CBMS Academic Committee). Both the Cellular and Molecular Parasitology program and the Neurobiology program are prestigious, increasing the visibility of our program and providing salary support for students recruited into our program. The Research Training for Veterinary Students is a new program that will provide support and training for veterinary students interested in obtaining a Master’s degree. It is anticipated that a small number of these students will continue with a Ph.D. The Graduate Training for Veterinarians Training grant was recently awarded and the first applicants for the training grant are currently being screened.

6) A formal Comparative Biomedical Sciences graduate program retreat should be conducted each year to enhance the interaction and information exchange between faculty, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students.

- This is being discussed, but no action has been taken, primarily due to the lack of funds.

7) Opportunities for graduate students to participate in teaching in both informal and formalized settings should be encouraged.

- Although we no longer require that all students serve as teaching assistants for at least one semester, we do strongly encourage all students to gain teaching experience. We feel that there are many opportunities for the students in teaching in the DVM curriculum courses, graduate level courses and undergraduate courses.

In summary, we feel that we implemented a number of changes to our graduate that we anticipate will enhance our program. Many of these changes to the program have occurred recently and, thus, we cannot yet detail their effectiveness. One of the major areas of focus for has been to increase our domestic applicant pool, and we feel that we have made good progress in this area.

**Graduate Student Outcomes Assessment:** All graduate students are monitored throughout their graduate training. The student's progress through the graduate degree milestones (certification, prelim A, prelim B and defense for PhD candidates; certification and defense for MS candidates) are monitored by the Graduate Program Coordinator. Students not progressing in a timely fashion are reminded first by the Graduate Coordinator and then by the Academic Committee. Students are required to file annual progress reports, signed by all members of their graduate committee, to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

### **3. “Describe the assessment activity in your academic programs and departments.”**

Our assessment activities for the DVM program overlap school-wide and department-wide definitions, and thus information regarding departmental level assessments is primarily included in section 2 above. However, by way of summary, department-level assessments include the following:

- student course evaluations
- faculty peer review of courses
- departmental-level course reviews and re-evaluation (new process as described above)
- course evaluation data derived from student exit surveys at the time of graduation, as well as surveys of graduates and their employers, which is shared with departments
- feedback to departments from the Faculty–Student Liaison Committee discussions

### **4. “Describe plans for academic assessment activities for the coming year in your**

**school/college.”**

The SVM is undertaking several new assessment projects during the 2007-2008 academic year related to the DVM degree program. These include the following:

- A faculty taskforce has been created and is working to develop a statement of clinical competencies and a method to assess those competencies among our DVM degree program students. This project will address the new AVMA COE accreditation guidelines, and will provide valuable data to guide curriculum revisions within the DVM degree program.
- During 2007-2008, the Office of Academic Affairs in the SVM will begin yearly surveys of graduates (at time points 1 and 3 years post-graduation), as well as the employers of these graduates, to assess satisfaction with our DVM program as regards preparation for professional practice. A 2007 UW-Madison Assessment Funds grant proposal has been funded to help offset the costs for creation and implementation of these surveys as web-based evaluations.
- As part of the SVM's recently completed strategic planning exercise, the School will undertake a large scale review of its DVM curriculum beginning during in 2007. This will be a multi-faceted review, including analysis of data from multiple years of existing assessment processes, creation of faculty taskforces devoted to major content areas of the curriculum, and appointment of a Curriculum Coordinator to manage the review process, working in concert with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The ultimate goal of the process is to ensure that we continue to provide an educational experience that is matched to student needs and expectations of the profession, while still offering opportunities for enhanced curricular flexibility.