

**School of Veterinary Medicine**  
**Assessment Summary**  
September 2004

The School of Veterinary Medicine is actively invested in using assessment processes to continue to plan, develop and improve its programs. The School has a broadly defined assessment plan that has a timeline that is consistent with other program review processes in the SVM, include the following:

1. National Accreditation Process: Every 7 years the School works with the professional school accrediting body to assess the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program to assure it meets the standards set for accreditation. As a part of that review, the School produces a self-study that assesses our accomplishments in meeting our past goals and provides a forum in which we can set our goals for the future. Program assessments include student recruitment and admissions, curriculum content and teaching methods, professional student reviews, feedback from graduates, facilities, budget, faculty numbers, and other related information. Departments and other units provide an assessment of their progress that reflects on the 7 year timeline which includes changes they have made as a result of assessment processes they have implemented.

2. Departmental Reviews: As a part of the above review process, the 7 year review of the departments includes internal and external reviewers who assess the departmental self-study and work with the faculty on the reflection of whether the department has met its goals and objectives based upon the assessment measures that have been put in place. As a part of the 7 year review, department representatives meet with the Dean annually to discuss annual progress toward the departmental and School goals. Future goals and initiatives are identified at that meeting and assessment measures defined. The department's program assessment process is reviewed and the changes that have been implemented as a result of the assessments are noted.

3. Program Reviews: Each year the Dean meets with representatives of other school units to review the vision and the goals that the unit has and how those goals are contributing to the mission and goals of the School. That meeting serves as an update to the long-term assessment plan that is addressed in the 7 year self-study. Included in this process are the leadership of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, academic affairs, research and graduate training, and the budget/personnel unit.

**Has our School assessment plan been updated in the past year?**

The structure of our basic school-wide assessment plan is outlined above. The structure of the plan has not been update recently. This plan is based on a 7 year long-

term planning cycle that is updated and reevaluated annually. Annual reviews of outcomes data provide short term evaluations of progress. Changes in assessment plans occur at this level as the annual review identifies needed program changes and uses the feedback from the assessment tools to redefine program directions.

**Describe assessment activities conducted in the School for unit-wide programmatic or curricular review.**

**Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program Assessment:**

The Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program (DVM) is a major focus of unit-wide assessment in the School. Numerous assessment efforts are designed to evaluate and continually improve student recruiting, the admissions process, professional student support, and the many elements that encompass the professional curriculum.

Faculty in 4 of the 5 departments are actively involved curricular planning and teaching in the professional program. The School Curriculum Committee provides the forum for assessment of the content and structure of the professional curriculum, while the responsibility for the review and continual improvement of the individual courses falls upon the departments. The departments and the Curriculum Committee work together to identify needed curriculum content and to assess the success of the curriculum in meeting the curricular goals.

In 2003-04 the Curriculum Committee spearheaded the review of the curricular goals for the professional program. The focus of the review was to edit the curricular goals to reflect current theory and practice and to use assessment information to reflect on additions and subtractions that should be implemented in the curriculum. The following is a list of the assessment tools that contributed to the review:

1. Feedback from national studies on veterinary medical education
2. Feedback from questionnaires sent graduates of our program.
3. Feedback from employers of our graduates
4. Feedback from student focus groups
5. Feedback on the curriculum from graduating students
6. Feedback from national board exam results
7. Reviews of the strengths and weaknesses of 4<sup>th</sup> year students in clinical rotations and externships
8. Assessment of the 4<sup>th</sup> year students from outside ambulatory practitioners
9. Faculty assessment of student performance in the clinical rotations
10. Competitiveness of our graduates for internships and employment
11. Evaluation of the quality of the new first year class.

The Curricular Goals changed as a result of the impact of the above assessment data on the review process. Business, ethics and communications courses were added to the curriculum to address the nationally recognized data that supported this content as necessary for success in the field. Departments were asked to review assessment

feedback that focused on their department and develop processes for continuing to improve their courses. In 2004-05 the Curriculum Committee will coordinate the review of departmental process that has been implemented to address the assessment feedback.

## **Graduate Program Assessment**

The graduate program in the School of Veterinary Medicine is hosted by the Department of Comparative Biomedical Science (CBMS). The CBMS Graduate Program was last reviewed by the Graduate School in Sept. 2000 (then known as the Veterinary Science graduate program).

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.

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 five 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
- 2) A new initiative is to develop a formal half-day orientation for the graduate 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.
- 3) There is a need to advertise the program and recruit more aggressively to enhance the applicant pool. Our website has been revamped to make it more user friendly and more easily up-dateable. We have also changed our name to Comparative Biomedical Sciences as we felt that the previous name of our program (Veterinary

Science) did not adequately describe the research programs of our trainers. Informal surveys demonstrated that many prospective students had 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. This change makes us 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.

- 4) There is a need to set aside funds for student recruitment visits. We have funds from the Graduate School (~\$2800 this year) for student recruitment, including visits.
- 5) Steps need to be taken to develop training grant applications to improve the quality of the applicant pool. The Academic Committee has been discussing various approaches for the development of training grant applications but has not reached consensus on the best approach.
- 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 Veterinary Medicine courses, graduate level courses and undergraduate courses.

In summary, we feel that we have initiated a multitude of changes that will enhance our program. As many of these changes are less than a year old, we cannot yet detail their effectiveness. One of the major areas of focus for the next couple of years will be increasing our domestic applicant pool.

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 and 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. (The portion of the report on graduate program assessment prepared by R. Klipstein AHABS 10/04)

## **Describe assessment activity in your academic programs and departments**

Do our academic programs have assessment plans? Yes, the Professional Program (DVM) and the Graduate Program have assessment plans as described above. The School continues to modify and improve the assessment processes to broaden the areas of the student programs that we assess. In addition, we continue to refine the use of the feedback data to evaluate our programs and make changes that will result in continual improvement. The DVM program curricular goals and objectives provide the framework for planning and assessment of the curriculum. The courses are planned and developed in the departments using the curricular goals as a basis.

The following processes are used to continue to evaluate and improve the courses in the professional curriculum (including course content and faculty teaching effectiveness):

1. Student evaluations
2. Peer review
3. Feedback from graduates
4. Curriculum Committee review of course content
5. Review by the Faculty-Student Liaison Committee

In addition to the above assessment processes, the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Student Liaison Committee provide a forum for curricular review. Review across the curriculum is the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee, while individual course review is the responsibility of the departments.

Examples of curricular change that has occurred as a result of assessment activities follow:

1. The addition of more case-based learning in the courses.
2. The addition of more problem-solving learning throughout the curriculum.
3. The addition of the use of the Myers-Briggs personal style assessment to support the development of team building efforts among the students.
4. The addition of courses in business, ethics and communication skills
5. The retention of the Ambulatory rotation as required for all students
6. The redesign of the Biochemistry Course
7. The addition of additional hands-on experiences early in the curriculum
8. The redesign of the third year medicine courses
9. The development of 5 core required course options in 4<sup>th</sup> year based upon the student's career goals.

**Assessment Grid** – see attached Excel Document

## **Plans for Academic Assessment Activities for 2004-05**

The School plans to continue to work within the planned assessment framework to continue to evaluate our success in meeting the goals of our programs and to assess how we can continue to improve our ability to build programs of excellence. We will continue to gather feedback from our constituents as a part of our program review. As indicated previously in this report, we have used assessment tools for many years as an essential part of our self-evaluation. Having years of assessment data from a variety of sources has helped us find areas that need change and to follow the effects of that change on the program. This year the Curriculum Committee plans to use the assessment data from our students and graduates to identify areas of the curriculum that continue to be highlighted as needing change. The departments and the Curriculum Committee will work together to encourage that change to take place.

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10/04