

University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine to Open Chicago Teaching Hospital

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By Angela Pham

The University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine in Urbana is expanding its curriculum to reach into the Windy City. In early 2009, the school will open the Chicago Center for Veterinary Medicine, which will feature a primary-care teaching facility. With state-of-the-art medical and business practices, the clinic will engage veterinary students in all aspects of its operation. Specialists from the Urbana hospital will offer consultations for clients through teleconferencing and on-site appointment days.

“Eventually, this location will also serve as our headquarters for recruiting students from under-represented backgrounds,” said Christine Beuoy, director of communications for the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Plans call for the clinic to provide educational programming for pet owners and professional vets, as well as offer collaborations with biomedical researchers in the area. At the college's Urbana location, even first-year students learn in the teaching hospital through the Veterinary Clinical Orientation course. In fall 2010, the college will debut its Illinois Integrated Professional Curriculum, which aims to reinvent veterinary education by increasing the integration of basic and clinical sciences throughout the four-year program.

The revised curriculum program will put first-year students in the hospital on the first day. The rotations will occur at intervals throughout the four years, immersing students regularly in a clinical setting.

At a Glance:

Location: Urbana, Ill.

Opening date: 1948

Number of students: 430 DVM, 100 Ph.D/MS/interns/residents

Financial aid offered: Yes; \$270,000 available annually through awards and scholarships program

Programs offered: DVM, MS, Ph.D., Internship, Residency

Website: www.vetmed.illinois.eduThe school has graduated 3,721 veterinarians since its first class of 24 World War II veterans began in 1948, Beuoy said. The school's diverse curriculum attracted 841 applicants for fall 2008, leading to 120 accepted students. In all, 430 students are working to become doctors of veterinary medicine and 100 are pursuing master's degrees. The school provides a strong generalist education to cater to students' career interests. The college also offers a Ph.D. degree program, as well as internships and residencies.

“After graduation, our students may be treating any animal from a moose to a mouse,” said Mary Kelm, assistant dean for student affairs. “So we ensure that they receive an interdisciplinary grounding that emphasizes the preclinical and the clinical sciences for all species.”

The college specializes in giving students hands-on experience in multidisciplinary activities.

The Wildlife Medical Clinic's student teams make diagnoses and care for 2,000 ill or injured wild animals under a medical director's supervision.

Students also can work with a full-time faculty member at the Brookfield Zoo near Chicago, or participate in the prestigious Envirovet Summer Institute, led by an Illinois faculty member, which gives students exposure to real-life conservation and environmental health issues.



A summer research program for veterinary students has taken vet students to Uganda, Argentina and other locations in the world to explore infectious disease transmission among human and wild animal populations.

A joint DVM/Master's in public health degree program offered with the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois in Chicago extends the "one medicine" concept that unites human, animal and environmental health.

Exotic animal research and surgery are additional opportunities for students.

"The Zoological Pathology Program has long provided diagnostic service to Brookfield Zoo, Lincoln Park Zoo and Shedd Aquarium in Chicago," Beuoy said.

With its annual Fall Conference for Veterinarians on Sept. 11-12, the college plans to keep practitioners informed of current medical issues, such as the toxicological implications of the 2007 tainted pet food crisis.