

**AHC Vision & Planning**  
**COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE (CVM)**  
**Executive Summary**  
**4/7/00**

**Introduction:**

The CVM Vision & Planning Committee was formed from a mixture of the elected faculty on the CVM Strategic Planning Committee and other faculty appointed through a consensus process among Dean Jeffrey Klausner, Faculty Council Chair, Alan Lipowitz, and Dan Feeney (the Academic Health Center (AHC) Strategic Vision Executive Committee member serving as CVM Strategic Planning Committee Chair). Input from faculty, staff, students and non-CVM constituents was solicited and was incorporated into 6 “brainstorming” sessions held to address the questions posed by AHC Administration. Internal Subcommittees were defined to prepare specific responses to each of the 5 “Defining Questions”. Those reports are attached. Once near final draft reports were prepared, they were made available for CVM faculty, staff & student comment before final reports were prepared for submission.

The underlying theme in this report is one of connectedness and functional linkage both within the CVM and by the CVM to its clients, constituents and the rest of the AHC. The CVM must be recognized in its role as a major player in endeavors affecting the entire AHC including genomics, food safety and zoonoses. This exercise was a combination of defining the CVM’s current status (Where is the CVM now?), visioning for the CVM’s future (Where do we want to be in the next 3 - 5 years?), and assessing the political/fiscal realities for the CVM (What will it take to get where we want to be?). This Executive Summary provides an overview using this approach, where applicable, to each of the Defining Questions.

**Defining Questions:**

**1. What is our role in the health of Minnesotans, our land grant mandate?**

The CVM role in Minnesotans’ health is far reaching. From an education perspective, it includes training the next generation of veterinary practitioners, and offering continuing education/update/retool programs for the State’s veterinary professionals. From a community service perspective, it includes providing referral, diagnostic and consultation services to veterinary practitioners and livestock producers, protecting and improving the safety of the State’s food supply, and serving as a sentinel for diseases and agricultural-related environmental circumstances that may affect Minnesota’s animal and/or human populations. From a research perspective, it includes the continuous quest to identify, treat and eliminate diseases or circumstances affecting animal health, the identification and humane utilization of animal models for human disease, the understanding of and promotion of the human-animal bond and its importance to human physical and mental health, the development and utilization of advanced technologies (e.g. molecular and genetic processes) to facilitate animal production and human/animal well-being, and to serve as a source of “cutting-edge” bioinformation and economic analyses for Minnesota’s agricultural production and companion animal consumers, practitioners and consultants. To fulfill this “big picture”, the CVM must expand its collaborative liaisons across the AHC, it must foster its relationships with producers and practitioners, and it must increase its visibility and role in animal research related to human health. The future must include incorporation of user-friendly, internet-based access ports to CVM databases and CVM experts which can be a combination of fee for service and extension/land grant missions.

**2. How are we going to be a real player in the health care delivery process?**

The CVM has 3 major portals for its health care delivery endeavors. These include the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH), the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL), and the CVM’s heard health management programs. All of these missions should be nurtured and expanded to serve the needs of the State. The VTH is currently the only full-service referral veterinary hospital in Minnesota and, although growing, it must expand both its markets and its capabilities to maintain its market share. The VTH has become a massive referral practice in which teaching of veterinary students, interns, residents and graduate students occurs. It relies primarily on income generation for its survival because less than 15% of its operating budget comes from State/University of Minnesota revenues. The rest is income from services rendered to clients. The VTH has suffered from its initial and continued underfunded status, but has prospered despite its heavy commitment to education. The VTH needs to expand its operation beyond the St. Paul Campus for all of its teaching, service and research endeavors. It needs an infusion of capital

(approximately \$3.5M on a one-time basis) and restoration/expansion of teaching and research faculty (approximately \$1.2M/year recurring) to jump-start its quest to be both full-service and "state of the art". Details and financial needs are outlined in the attachments. Capital requests for VDM "state of the art" and faculty improvements are \$ 1.12M, one full faculty FTE and four half faculty FTE's (the other half to be funded through VDM) for the next biennium." Included in these VTH & VDM needs are those related to electronic communication, database management, and accountability.

The VDL like the VTH is experiencing volume growth from fee for service and research users and an expansion of offerings due to technological developments. Because of its multifaceted mission of monitoring production and companion animal disease, developing more sensitive and specific diagnostic techniques, and providing current and applicable information to the practitioners, producers, and private consumers of Minnesota, internal updates related to infomatics, molecular and genetic techniques, as well as faculty positions to support these expansions will be necessary. Details and financial needs are outlined in the attachments.

The CVM must maintain and expand its connectedness to the livestock producers of Minnesota through its heard health economics and management programs. These programs are research-based and some are unique to the University of Minnesota. Their relevance to the economic health of Minnesota livestock producers, the economic impact of livestock production on Minnesota consumers, and food safety cannot be overstated. These programs need to have broader recognition across the State for their contribution as well as within the AHC as a source of research collaboration.

### 3. What is our vision for the health professionals that we education and train?

The CVM has the dual strength and potential of producing both graduate veterinarians as well as specialty and/or advanced degree trained veterinarians and researchers. The vision for the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) students is one of having "practice-ready" skills (including business and ethics), possessing the basic skills to pursue employment paths other than classical practice (e.g. industrial medicine and research, public/government practice, environmental/zoonotic monitoring, etc.), and promoting lifelong learning (including skills related to electronic communication and continuing education). These endeavors require continued awareness of the advantages of this profession through public information campaigns, a pool of talented and dedicated applicants (which is currently very strong and must be maintained), sources of financial aid to allow opportunities for those of all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, a diverse and talented faculty (which has suffered due to recurrent retrenchments), an efficient and user-friendly curriculum with course offerings applicable to professional (DVM) and graduate students as well as post graduates wishing to update or retool. These endeavors require conscious evolution which has been occurring and will continue to occur. The vision for the clinical specialty and graduate degree training programs is to provide the best possible training to ensure these individuals are highly competitive in both the referral practice and academic arenas. However, increased faculty and technical support positions and well as infrastructure development will be needed to realize these visions.

### 4. How will we achieve being top ranked in research performance?

The CVM currently has a largely untapped research potential. While the College has strong, individualized research programs in companion and production animal medicine/management, pathologic mechanisms/origins of disease, molecular biology, genomics and food animal biotechnology, integration of these programs across applicable disciplines has never been achieved. The concept of multidisciplinary research teams from within the College and other AHC or Agricultural Institute experts has been advanced by the CVM Strategic Vision Committee. The impetus here is to capitalize on the combined clinical and basic expertise available in the College. This would foster research relevant to the conditions recognized in the clinical/applied CVM endeavors which can be investigated in collaboration with the CVM management and molecular experts. These research teams may be constructed around species or body systems. This collaborative approach would make optimum use of the CVM's collective academic potential and effectively utilize those with proven grant-writing expertise. This team approach would enable the CVM to develop relationships with private industry, other AHC units and the College of Agriculture to foster research funding as well as having prepared groups to pursue grant opportunities promptly as they come available. Coordination would occur at the level of the CVM Associate Dean for Research.

5. How will we develop a culture of service and accountability (internal and external) with an environment of good communication and consultative decision making?

The University of Minnesota has regularly used the dubious process of incremental budget modification (usually retrenchment) without regard to its differential effect on core teaching, research or service programs, evolving programs in any of these areas, or the effects on the faculty or staff. Faculty cannot be held accountable for situations beyond their responsibility. Being asked to responsibly shepherd resources is one aspect. However, being financially crippled but told to “do good things” without the necessary resources is quite another. The CVM suffers from economic strangulation. The institution is afflicted by analytic paralysis (based in part on protectionism) rendering it unable to define what it takes (e.g. academic positions, space, support staff, infrastructure) to do a specific job (e.g. train professional or graduate students, provide public service, perform research, maintain professional accreditation). The AHC needs to develop metrics related to effort needed for and effort expended on teaching, research, and service. The AHC also needs to identify what it actually needs in the way of faculty and staff positions (full-time equivalents [FTE’s]), space, etc. to do the things it must do. A long-term plan should be in place to permit the institution, the AHC and the DVM to make thoughtful position and fund allocations based on the needs in and expectations for any specific area (e.g. college, department, service portal, etc.).

This need for “right-sizing” goes beyond having defined and adequately funded core programs. It must also encompass accountability within those programs through analysis of defined metrics. In addition, it places appropriate perspective and priority on programs that are not core, but which are complementary to (but not essential for) core programs. Retrenchments tend to weaken core programs and new initiatives rarely rebuild these core programs. In those noncore programs, funding alternatives must be explored, but there should be no expectation that such programs will continue unless they become self-supporting. This accountability must be based on a combination quality assessment, income generation, relationship to program accreditation, costs, operation efficiency and quantifiable products/output/effort. Formula-based fund/FTE allocation coupled with appropriate incentive plans developed in an environment of broad faculty, staff, student, and constituent consultation may be the key to defensible legislative requests, justifiable program decisions (e.g. phase-out, maintain, enhance, initiate), realistic faculty expectations, and appropriate faculty recognition and rewards. Details related to CVM teaching, research service, professional development and web challenge are included in the attachments.

There is also a need for administrative accountability. This is particularly notable for the faculty and staff working in the units managed by specific administrators. Decisions should be based on broad input and the outcome justified to the faculty and staff affected. This is how “buy-in” for change can be achieved without resorting to “top-down” authoritarian measures which rarely result in willing participation by those doing the work. This is particularly important for AHC and CVM units involved with revenue generation.