

Message from Dean Herbert Whiteley

University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine

Equine Group Envisions Sports Medicine Complex

Where do you want to be in 5 years? This simple question has been pondered by many at the College of Veterinary Medicine over the past several months as we work with a major architectural firm to develop a master plan to meet our facilities needs of the future.

Our equine medicine and surgery section seized this opportunity to generate an exciting answer. They have proposed the creation of an Equine Sports Medicine and Surgery Clinic—an advanced facility with diagnostic and therapeutic modalities unmatched elsewhere in the state.

Among the capabilities faculty envision for the new facility are:

- a half-mile racetrack and indoor riding arena
- a swimming pool for use in exercise rehabilitation as well as for high-risk anesthetic recovery
- diagnostic imaging capabilities including CT, MRI, portable radiography, and nuclear scintigraphy
- a high-speed treadmill equipped with videoendoscopy, ECG telemetry, thermography, and video and audio recording systems to assist in analyzing performance problems
- immediate blood gas analyzer
- advanced molecular diagnostics testing
- a force-plate runway with video image capture for advanced lameness diagnosis.

Integral to the vision for this new facility is the addition of personnel, ranging from tenure-track faculty in equine surgery, medicine, anesthesia, and imaging to equine residents and interns to technicians devoted to treadmill operation, physical therapy, laboratory work, and other

areas. Another feature discussed is a transport system to pick up and deliver equine patients from around the state of Illinois.

Illinois already has a strong equine program known for handling difficult lameness cases. For 25 years we have had nuclear scintigraphy capabilities, with equine diagnostic approaches pioneered here by professor emeritus Dr. Robert Twardock.

Two senior faculty members, Dr. Jonathan Foreman and Dr. Thomas Goetz, both board certified in internal medicine, have conducted extensive research on equine exercise physiology and have clinical expertise in equine sports medicine.

Two board-certified surgeons have joined the equine section in the past 3 years. Dr. Allison Stewart and Dr. Chris Byron have research and clinical interests in orthopedics. Both conduct studies on cartilage biology and perform surgeries to address joint disease and fracture repair.

The services of farrier Mike Finn complement the expertise of our equine section. The concept of the Equine Sports Medicine facility calls for a full-time farrier service closely integrated into the veterinary service.

The benefits of creating an Equine Sports Medicine and Surgery Clinic at the University of Illinois are many: it would provide more comprehensive and valuable service to the equine industry of Illinois, with improved diagnostic and therapeutic options for enhanced patient rehabilitation and greater client satisfaction; it would give veterinary students interested in equine practice a broader range of cases; and it would facilitate scholarly contributions in the area of equine performance and physiology.

I look to Illinois practitioners for feedback regarding this vision for the Illinois equine section. We are moving rapidly ahead with creating the master plan for future facilities. How quickly those plans can be turned into new buildings and enhanced programs will depend on the level of external support. As Dr. Byron says, "We've already got the know-how. Now we need the land to build on and the money."

Please feel free to contact me at dean@cvm.uiuc.edu with your input and to follow the progress of the facility planning process on our Web site (www.cvm.uiuc.edu), via the link to “Building Community.”