

Who Do You Know?

Join Us for Two Crucial Campaigns for Leadership at Illinois

By Dean Herb Whiteley

You know the saying “It’s not *what* you know, it’s *who* you know.”

Today who *you* know may be a very key factor in accelerating Illinois to excellence.

The ability of our profession and our College to maximize our contributions to society and achieve prominence may well be determined within the next few years by our success on two critical fronts: the legislative and the philanthropic. You can help us.

The Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association has already been a tremendous asset on the legislative front in Springfield. As you know, our College lags far behind its peers in the Big 10 and elsewhere in the country, receiving 42 percent (or \$7 million) below the national mean for total state dollars in a comparison of all 26 U.S. veterinary institutions that receive state support. We need to convey the message to state legislators that we contribute value to the state. Your continued advocacy for us speaks volumes.

At the federal level, the proposed Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act (S.914/H.R.2206) would significantly increase the number of veterinarians serving in key public health areas, such as biomedical research and prevention of zoonotic and other infectious disease. With passage and funding of this bill, our College could earn grants to expand our teaching facilities and our programs for veterinary students interested in careers focused on public health and research.

Only five Illinois legislators—Sen. Dick Durbin, Sen. Barak Obama, and Congress members Tim Johnson (Dist. 15), Bobby Rush (Dist. 1), and Janice Schakowsky (Dist. 9)—have signed on as supporters of the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act. The majority of Illinois legislators still need to be educated about this issue and urged to support the bill.

To achieve our vision of leadership we need not only increased funding at the state and federal levels, but also a substantial increase in private giving.

Our College is pursuing a vision to be a leader in veterinary and comparative biomedical education, scholarship, and public engagement in the University of Illinois system, in the state, in the nation, and around the world. When our College is recognized as a leader, you benefit directly because our leadership elevates the level of veterinary practice and the prominence of the veterinary profession in this state.

We have charted a plan for success. Components include strengthening our DVM program with new opportunities, scholarships, and teaching facilities for veterinary students; enhancing clinical service with state-of-the-art facilities and a Chicago presence; anchoring our outstanding research programs with endowed professorships, chairs, and graduate student fellowships; and building excellence in new areas such as translational biomedical research.

To make these plans a reality, we have set the ambitious goal of raising \$4.5 million per year in private giving for the next five years.

There are many ways our alumni and friends can help us. Some of you are capable of making a significant gift to the College in support of an initiative that speaks to you. And some in that position may also be willing to serve on a campaign leadership board, individuals who work with us to identify and solicit other top donors.

Others of you may make more modest gifts yourself but may lead us to new donors. There is untapped potential for gifts from the grateful clients of our alumni. Every day you assist devoted companion animal owners, key figures in the equine industry, or agribusiness leaders who might like to partner with the College on a philanthropic project.

So it's time to ask yourself: Who do *I* know?

Do you have a connection to an Illinois legislator in Springfield or Washington, D.C.? If so, please let us know so we can work with you to deliver our message. (See the list for more information about how to contribute on the legislative front.)

Do you know a client or business contact with the potential to make a major gift, or are you considering making a large gift? Our assistant dean for advancement, Brenda Betts, can discuss these options with you. You can reach her at 217/333-5545.

Your assistance, through whatever means you are capable of, will be deeply appreciated by our College, by the new generations of veterinary practitioners we educate, and by those whose lives are touched by our research and service activities.

Take Legislative Action Now!

The American Veterinary Medical Association has a user-friendly Web site with information about the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act and easy ways to send a message to your representatives in Washington. It is linked from the bottom of this page:

www.aavmc.org/LegislativeEfforts.htm.

If you have ties to any Members of Congress listed here (with district number and city), please call the dean's office at 217/333-2760 to discuss other strategies for reaching them.

Jesse Jackson Jr. (02, Chicago)
Daniel Lipinski (03, Western Springs)
Luis Gutierrez (04, Chicago)
Rahm Emanuel (05, Chicago)
Henry Hyde (06, Wood Dale)
Danny Davis (07, Chicago)
Melissa Bean (08, Barrington)
Mark Steven Kirk (10, Highland Park)
Jerry Weller (11, Morris)
Jerry Costello (12, Belleville)
Judy Biggert (13, Hinsdale)
Dennis Hastert (14, Yorkville)
Donald Manzullo (16, Egan)
Lane Evans (17, Rock Island)
Ray LaHood (18, Peoria)
John Shimkus (19, Collinsville)