

Chicago Center Will Soon Be Reality

By Herb Whiteley

For many years the College of Veterinary Medicine has recognized the value of opening a clinical facility in the Chicago metropolitan area. We believe a strong presence there will help us better fulfill our mission of teaching and research and will allow us to better serve the needs of the population center of our state.

Two years ago, this idea was identified among the College's top five strategic priorities. The idea has received enthusiastic positive response from Chicago-area practitioners. At last, this idea is becoming a reality.

Within the coming year, the University of Illinois Chicago Center for Veterinary Medicine will open at 2242 West Harrison, in the medical district south of the Loop. We are in the process of remodeling this space to create a primary care clinic aimed at serving the rapidly growing population in this revitalized neighborhood.

Benefits of the new facility touch every aspect of our mission:

- **Enhanced veterinary student education.** The Chicago clinic will give veterinary students real-world experience with handling routine clinical cases and managing aspects of a practice.
- **Increased caseload for Urbana-based service centers.** Eventually, selected clinical specialty services may be offered at the clinic. Cases may also be referred to specialists at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital and Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory on the Urbana campus. There is currently a need for a veterinary specialty referral center in the downtown area.
- **Expanded opportunities for research.** A Chicago location exponentially expands our access to patients to enroll in clinical trials. It also fosters partnerships with Chicago biomedical research facilities and colleagues at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine, College of Pharmacy, and School of Public Health.
- **New fund-raising prospects.** Greater visibility in the state's population and wealth center will open doors to new donors.
- **Enhanced student recruitment.** A Chicago location improves access to populations currently underrepresented in the veterinary field.
- **New options for faculty recruitment.** A Chicago location may enhance our ability to attract in-demand specialty clinicians to our faculty.
- **New public engagement programs.** Our veterinary continuing education and public outreach programs will be more accessible to the largest metropolitan area of the state.

The new center will build upon several strong Chicago-based programs of the College: the Zoological Pathology Program, which provides diagnostic service to Brookfield and Lincoln

Park zoos and Shedd Aquarium; our zoological medicine residency program as well as veterinary student clinical experiences overseen by our faculty member at Brookfield; the Laboratory Animal Pathology Program, which assists biomedical researchers in interpreting studies that use animal models; and partnerships with the Anti-Cruelty Society to promote student recruitment, veterinary student experiences in shelter medicine, and animal owner education.

By establishing the University of Illinois Chicago Center for Veterinary Medicine, our College raises its visibility in the important Chicago metropolitan area. Greater visibility for the College ultimately benefits our alumni, regardless of where they practice.

As we achieve our vision of leadership in the veterinary profession, we elevate the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association and its members.

Please contact me at dean@cvm.uiuc.edu if you would like to find out how you can support our Chicago initiative.