

Message from Dean Herbert Whiteley

University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine

### **Clinical Medicine a Priority for the College**

The continued excellence of clinical service and teaching at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital is a top priority for the College and for me. However, with pressures from growing private specialty practices and shrinking university budgets, hospitals at veterinary colleges across the country are recognizing that they cannot continue being the comprehensive tertiary referral centers that they had been over the past 30 years.

Faculty turnover is one aspect of this changing reality. Faculty have opportunities to enter the private sector, take on leadership roles at other institutions, or relocate for family reasons. We have led an aggressive recruiting program over the past several years, hiring 18 new clinical medicine faculty members. Eight searches are currently under way, and several more are planned for next year.

Equally important, we have changed our administrative structure to intensify our focus on excellence in the department and in the hospital.

Dr. Ann Johnson has been in place since August as interim director of the teaching hospital. To this newly created position Ann brings international leadership as an orthopedic surgeon and innovative educator, as well as proven administrative ability that includes serving as head of the small animal surgery section and interim department head. I am grateful to Ann for returning from semi-retirement to establish the hospital director role while the search for a permanent director progresses.

“My top goals in this position are continued excellence in clinical service along with improved communication and access for clients and referring veterinarians,” she said recently. She has begun by establishing correspondence with referring practitioners to keep them abreast of

changes in service, and she is exploring new models to meet critical needs. For example, she has arranged for Drs. Dan Hogan and Henry Green from Purdue University to provide weekly cardiology service beginning September 12.

Ann welcomes feedback of any sort from referring practitioners to help the hospital learn how to better meet your needs. The best way to reach her is through her administrative secretary, Mindy Garth, at 217/265-6554 or via email at [aljohns@uiuc.edu](mailto:aljohns@uiuc.edu). And of course, referring veterinarians can get their questions answered by call the referral hotline at 217-333-5311.

By November Dr. David Williams will be on board as the new clinical medicine department head. David joins us from Texas A&M University, where he led the Gastrointestinal Laboratory. His international reputation will help draw new faculty to the department. He promises to foster a culture that supports top-notch clinical research while maintaining a deep commitment to professional education with a real-world focus.

I'd like to thank Dr. Peter Constable, an outstanding clinician and researcher, for serving as interim head of the Department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine over the past year. He deserves tremendous praise for his leadership and contributions.

And thanks are also due Illinois veterinarians for their patience and support as we emerge from a troubling period. Our many new faculty members are excellent clinician educators and scientists, and I'm sure you will find working with them rewarding.

Only in partnership with you can our hospital and teaching program continue to excel. I know that Drs. Johnson and Williams welcome your comments and questions, as do I. You can reach me at [dean@cvm.uiuc.edu](mailto:dean@cvm.uiuc.edu).