



Bellwether Magazine

Volume 1
Number 41 *Fall/Winter 1997*

Article 3

10-1-1997

From the Dean

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From The Dean



The other day I was intrigued to learn that the number of applications for next year's class, the Class of '02, is up by 10% to a total of 1360 for 109 places. This trend has been growing


for the past seven years and reflects increased interest in veterinary medicine as a career. This increased interest is not restricted to young people for applications now cover a wide age spectrum. In recent years our youngest applicant was 18 and our oldest 59.

Undoubtedly, provision of student scholarships to offset the high cost of tuition at Penn has played an important role in amplifying the number of applications we receive and we are tremendously grateful to the Governor and Pennsylvania legislature, the alumni, and the School's many friends and benefactors for their support and generosity. But I believe there are additional factors at work, more and more young people recognize the expanding opportunities and riveting challenges for veterinary medicine in the next century. These prospects radiate well beyond the traditional but increasingly sophisticated role veterinarians play in providing care for domestic

animals. Examples of these opportunities include:

- Development and application of biotechnology in animal agriculture,
- Increasing the health and productivity of animal agriculture in the U.S. to sustain the industry and meet growing world markets for our goods. By 2050 it is projected that world food production must expand threefold to meet the needs of a burgeoning global population; this will include a population in developing nations that is moving up-scale and demanding more and more animal products in their diet.
- Investigating environmental issues both in the U.S. and abroad. This work will include the inter-related problems of nutrition, odor and waste management that accompany intensive animal agriculture,
- Wildlife preservation,
- Protection of the oceans and developing aquaculture in the U.S. as an environmentally sensitive industry. After oil, importation of seafood products is presently the largest contributor to the balance of payments deficit in the U.S. Control of infectious disease is one of the greatest challenges facing this fledgling industry. We know virtually nothing about the incidence and impact of infectious disease among economically important vertebrate and invertebrate species in the oceans.

- Controlling new and emerging infectious diseases affecting both animals and man. All of the dangerous new infectious diseases that have recently been reported to afflict humans originated in animals.
- Controlling the safety of the Nation's food supply in a global marketplace,
- Interpreting the ethical use of animals in society,
- Expanding the care of companion animals for an aging, urbanized society in which demographers now predict more and more people will be living alone.

Veterinary medicine has expanded remarkably during the past 30 years. In my view this growth is far from over and the profession will continue to address an ever more complex and important range of societal concerns well into the next century. Moreover, these new challenges offer the profession a more dazzling and inviting palate than the medical profession which is more and more enveloped and constrained by cost containment and HMOs. So I am not surprised that we are attracting growing numbers of the brightest and most able students and I believe this pattern will continue for years to come. 

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Class of 2001

The 74 women and 33 men who comprise the Class of 2001 attended 78 different undergraduate schools and come from 17 states and four foreign countries. Pennsylvania is the home state of the majority of students, 59, followed by New York with 12, New Jersey with seven and California with six. The other 13 states are represented by one or two students each. The four foreign students come from Canada, Germany, Morocco, and the United Kingdom. Advanced degrees held by the students include M.A. (3), M.S. (6), M.B.A. (1), Ph.D.(5).