

**An Act Concerning an Appropriation to Provide Assistance and Access to Schools of Veterinary Medicine.**

**Testimony given by Drs. Gregory Weidemann and Cameron Faustman, Dean and Associate Dean, respectively, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut (UConn).**

**Background:**

- There are 28 Colleges/Schools of veterinary medicine in the United States. Until Fall 2008, Connecticut was one of three states that lacked both its own veterinary college/school and contract arrangements with any College/School of veterinary medicine (the others are Rhode Island and Vermont).
- Connecticut has established Medical, Dental and Law Schools, however, residents lack access to a veterinary medicine education that is available to residents in 47 other states. Graduates from such education programs prefer to pursue careers in geographical proximity to their home locations and it has been difficult for Connecticut to attract non-resident veterinarians. The Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association estimates that 25 new graduates per year are required to meet Connecticut's needs.
- As well as clinical treatment of pet and agricultural animals, veterinarians play important roles in many other fields important to Connecticut, including Public Health, Infectious Disease Response and Research, Food Safety, Pharmaceutical Research and Development, Homeland Security, and State and Federal Regulatory Agencies.

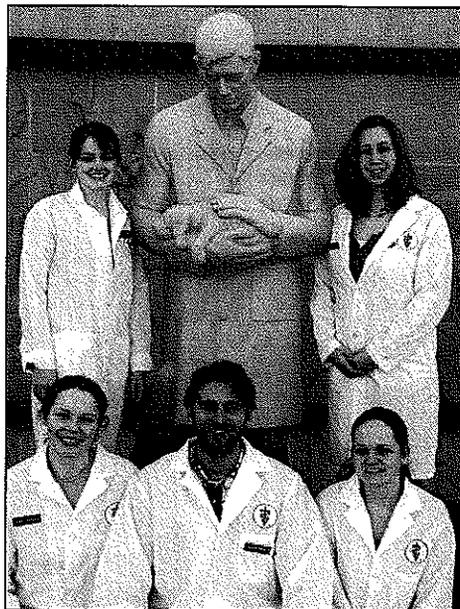
**Current Status:**

- The Connecticut legislature passed legislation for Fiscal Year 2008 that provided funding to the Department of Higher Education (DHE) for the purpose of assisting qualified Connecticut residents intending to pursue an education in veterinary medicine. DHE established a memorandum of agreement with UConn that directed the latter to solicit proposals from domestic AVMA-accredited institutions that would establish positions (contracts) for guaranteed admission of qualified Connecticut residents.
- Iowa State University was selected as the program that offered the best total experience for Connecticut residents. ***Five positions were secured that provide guaranteed access at the cost of in-state tuition!***
- In our first year of the program, Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine selected the recipients of the positions for Connecticut residents.
  - 43 applications were received from Connecticut residents for admission in Fall 2008.
  - 26 of these applicants were invited to interview.
  - 15 applicants were offered admission to the program (7 UConn students, 8 from other undergraduate universities). This is the greatest number of Connecticut residents ever admitted to this program.

**Needs:**

- For the next biennial budget, and to assure continued support for admitted students, it is critical to secure funding for the five FY'08 students as well as funding to begin new classes of 5 students each in FY'10 and FY'11. Cost = \$200,000 for FY'10; \$300,000 for FY'11.
- The first class of 5 Connecticut students began the 4-year DVM program in the fall of 2008. They are pictured at right with the *Gentle Doctor*, a landmark statue at Iowa State's College of Veterinary Medicine. There is a need to fulfill the obligation for continued support of these 5 Connecticut residents and for the subsequent classes of students that will matriculate in the future.

**Left to Right:** back row: Kathryn Dorsey (Trumbull, CT), Lindsay Leka (Trumbull, CT); front row: Lindsay Fitzgerald (Avon, CT), Christian Proietto (Guilford, CT), Danielle Lipson (Norwalk, CT).



Questions about this program can be directed to: Cameron Faustman, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut, 1376 Storrs Road, Unit-4090, Storrs, Connecticut 06269-4090.