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A Chat With the Dean

Kay Harken and Mark Rogers*

"Effective college teaching is the answer to the problem of an increasing amount of knowledge in the field of veterinary medicine," stated Dean Kitchell about the mounting concern over how to secure more successful teaching techniques for the future.

The Dean feels that motivation is the keystone in the learning process on the part of the student. "The responsibility for increasing the effectiveness of college teaching in the future in the face of increasing demands on the student belongs to the faculty," he remarked. "To do this we will need to weed out some of the less important material now taught and concentrate more on pertinent and practical aspects. In addition, we must teach the student how to learn more quickly. This is one of our main objectives in the first quarter of the freshman year. Audiovisual aids must be used more in the future. The teacher must associate basic concepts with practical clinical material whenever possible to develop learning by association. This will help to eliminate much of the strict memory work now being used by many students in the various Colleges of Veterinary Medicine."

Dean Kitchell also feels that the much disputed idea of specialization within the veterinary college is unnecessary at the present time, and similarly sees that there is no need for lengthening of the program within the college.

STUDENT-FACULTY RELATIONS

"Improvements in student-faculty relations must begin with the student," said Dean Kitchell, "but I realize that this is

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often difficult for him [the student] due to his position."

The Dean is vitally concerned when students fail to pass courses in the veterinary college for any reason. He feels that students *should* consult privately with the faculty member concerned whenever problems arise between him and his instructor. Instructors are often unaware that difficulties exist, and consultation initiated by the student is, many times, their only way of knowing.

"The students must realize, however," he remarked, "that there is no simple solution for many of these problems. All too often, it seems, students will misinterpret the absence of quick results as apathy or indifference on the part of the instructor or the faculty as a whole. Tolerance on the part of both the students and the faculty is essential for a satisfactory and eventual mutual understanding and solving of the problem." Quoting a phrase from President Parks' recent commencement address, Dr. Kitchell stated that students "must realize that tolerance is a means of achieving their objectives, and notable and worthy goals pursued intolerantly can never be fully or lastingly achieved."

In short, Dean Kitchell feels that students must not only show concern by consulting with the faculty, but also be patient in order for the best solutions to be found. Often the primary problem is simply a breakdown in communications and an unwillingness to consider that someone else might have a different point of view based upon quite a different background and experience. Again he emphasized the importance of tolerance.