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Iowa State University Veterinary Medical Library

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The collection of books and journals in the new Veterinary Medical Library is growing rapidly and use of materials has increased significantly since the move to the new College of Veterinary Medicine complex in the fall of 1976. The Library is proving both functional and aesthetically pleasing, and patron use has risen over 50%. The area encompassed is large enough to provide an exemplary collection, yet compact enough to allow one person to comfortably manage it, when necessary. Response of patrons has been extremely enthusiastic. The new library provides resources for both students and faculty, including indexing and abstracting materials that allow access to local, regional and national sources. In the future an effort will be made to encourage all veterinarians in Iowa to avail themselves of basic reference services provided by the Veterinary Medical Library.

The Veterinary Medical Library is a branch of the University Library established and maintained principally for use by the College of Veterinary Medicine. Other members of the University community, however, and health science professionals in the Ames area, including those at the U.S. National Animal Disease Center, are welcome to use the facility. The main function of the Veterinary Medical Library is to provide students and faculty in the Veterinary Medical College with basic resource materials and reference service in veterinary and comparative medicine. The University Library provides principal back-up materials.

The College of Veterinary Medicine had a small reading room for many years and in 1943 it was designated the Veterinary Students' Library. Publications, mainly monographs, were purchased with funds provided by the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association. Gifts from faculty and alumni were also added. For this special collection the University Library provided cataloging. A maximum of approximately 200 books were retained for use, and periodically the least used books were sent to the University Library for incorporation in that collection. This arrangement continued until plans for the new College complex two miles south of campus were initially discussed.

In the process of planning the most up-to-date facilities for the College of Veterinary Medicine, the Dean of Library Services, who enthusiastically endorsed the concept of a special health sciences library, worked closely with the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine to carefully plan the layout of a branch library for the College. A Veterinary Medical Librarian joined the Iowa State University Library staff in 1971 to establish a collection and to coordinate plans for the new Veterinary Medical Library. In order to help develop a biomedical collection for this new Library a grant proposal was initiated and subsequently submitted to the National Library of Medicine. In 1973 the National Institutes of Health awarded funds to the Iowa State University Library for materials for the new Veterinary Medical Library. Over a three-year period, NIH contributed $88,000 for the purchase of books and journals considered essential for a basic working collection. Various bibliographies and the holdings of other Veterinary Medical libraries were consulted in an effort to acquire the most pertinent publications possible. Of the 10,000 volumes added to the collection in that three-year period, approximately 40% were purchased with the Medical Library Resource Grant funds.

Meanwhile the new $25.7 million Veterinary Medical College complex was being completed. Within the complex the
Library is part of the central, administrative core, adjacent to the Biomedical Communications Section. The Library occupies 6,800 square feet, with collection space for 25,000 volumes and seating for 140 readers. Warm earth tones predominate in the carpeting and furnishings, providing an inviting study and research environment. Gift funds to the College of Veterinary Medicine have provided a number of original paintings by Professor M. J. Kitzman of the Department of Architecture, several of which embellish the Library.

The Library floor plan can best be visualized as fitting into a large rectangle. The circulation center is equidistant between banks of shelving which, on one side, hold monographs arranged by Library of Congress call number and, on the other side, journals arranged alphabetically by title. A separate microfilm room housing several reader-printers, a workroom and staff service area, and the librarian’s office are located opposite the circulation center. A coin operated photocopy machine for patron use is located in the Reference area. Many of the current unbound issues of journals are displayed on slanting wooden shelves in a popular lounge area. Carrels are arranged along uninterrupted wall expanses and provide an opportunity for individual study. Large tables have been placed at the far ends of the room where several students may work together on an assignment. A display case is located inside the entry and different exhibits are arranged each quarter. One on biomedical illustration by the college medical artist and one on photography by the College medical photographer have been among those featured.

The decision to develop a working collection of 25,000 volumes was predicated on the extensive, centralized collection in the University Library which functions as the principal backup source. Books and journals housed in the old Veterinary Medical Quadrangle totaled nearly 10,000 volumes. At the time of the move, these volumes were fused with approximately 5,000 volumes, acquired and held temporarily in the University Library, and with 1,000 volumes from the Veterinary Medical Research Institute. Since fall another 2,000 volumes have been received so the collection now totals over 18,000 volumes. The medical Library Resource Grant helped greatly in initial
collection development. The University Library now generously provides funds for books and serials, including journal subscriptions which now total over 550.

Gifts have also contributed to the quality and breadth of the collection. Individuals, both staff members and graduates, have presented the Library with a valuable material. Memorial funds, such as those contributed by the Class of 1962, permit purchase of those additional publications that make the collection an eminently useful one for students and staff alike. In addition, the University Library recently reorganized its collection and disbanded the Undergraduate Section. Since many volumes in that collection were duplicates and not incorporated in the general holdings, numerous works of broad interest were selected from that collection to enhance the Veterinary Library collection. Included are books on evolution, behavior, agricultural history, as well as selected biography, poetry, art, recreation and science fiction.

In the fall of 1977 the University Library installed a computer terminal for on-line bibliographical retrieval. Agreements have been made with Lockheed Information Services, Bibliographic Retrieval Services, and System Development Corporation so access to data bases such as MEDLARS, BIOSIS Previews, Agricola and the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux is possible. Over 75 searches have thus far been prepared and run on the terminal in the University Library by the Veterinary Medical Librarian for faculty and students of the Veterinary College. It is hoped that eventually a terminal can be installed in the Veterinary Medical Library.

On weekdays the Veterinary Medical Librarian is assisted by two full-time Library Assistants and a half-time Clerk-Typist. On weekends and evenings students are in charge. Messenger service from the University Library is provided daily. Library hours during the academic sessions include evenings until 10 p.m., except Friday and Saturday when closing time is 5 p.m. and 1 p.m. respectively. Sunday the Library opens at 2 p.m.

Since moving to the new Library, circulation of books has increased by 75%. Circulation policy is based on that stipulated for University Library patrons. The student loan period is two weeks with renewals possible. Faculty may check out materials for the duration of an academic quarter. Neither bound nor unbound journals circulate except for purposes of photocopying. Reference questions have ranged from requests for information on prosthetic lenses for dogs to data on the heart beat of a lion. Since the collection contains a broad spectrum of materials in biology and biochemistry, as well as veterinary and comparative medicine, the Veterinary Medical Library now serves as a significant source of biomedical information.