Editorially

Iowa State University Veterinarian

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian

Part of the Veterinary Medicine Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian/vol24/iss3/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iowa State University Veterinarian by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
We, as veterinary students, are sometimes asked by students from the other departments to comment on our honor system. It is with pride that each of us can attest to the effectiveness of this program in our college. Apparently students in other colleges at Iowa State University are not convinced that the honor system would work in their classes. This is evident by the failure of a proposed University honor system in 1958. This proposal failed because the students were too concerned with the "mechanics" of it. The majority of students who voiced opinions objected to the probability of being tagged a "tattler" or "informer" if they found it necessary to report a violator. Thus it appears that many honest students would rather continue to be parasitized by a "cheater" than to report any observed cheating incident.

The honor code of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State was initiated by the students and approved by the faculty on a two-year trial basis in April, 1941. This was the first such program at this school and the first in all schools of Veterinary Medicine in this country. Although a revision was adopted in 1954, the basic principles as outlined in the original code of honor were retained.

How do we know the honor code is working? We can never be certain it is 100% effective — it probably is not because perfection is hard to attain. But the fact that both students and faculty remain wholeheartedly in favor of it as it starts its twenty-second year of operation, indicates that it is highly effective.

Why is our honor system effective when similar programs are meeting only limited success elsewhere on campus? Possibly, the somewhat greater age and maturity of veterinary students enables them to realize that it is what they learn that is of most importance, not the mark attained or the ability to pass a course. The sincere student interest in the profession, and therefore in the course work, promotes good study habits and thus largely negates the necessity of cheating to pass tests. Also, as students, we realize we are studying to become a part of an ethical profession. This, undoubtedly, has much to do with discouraging dishonest or unethical practices while in school. In fact, adherence to the honor code is probably the best possible formal training in ethical standards that we can realize.

We owe much to the students who initiated the code of honor. Likewise, we are indebted to each student since that time, who by realizing his sense of responsibility has allowed the honor code to remain in operation so that we might enjoy the self-respect that it fosters.

Each of us, in turn, must take this same responsibility to assure our future colleagues the privileges of the honor system. The majority of students will never be directly involved in a major infraction of the honor code. Yet, we have probably all unwittingly violated the code at some time; e.g., if an instructor sets a time limit for an exam each student who writes beyond that time is committing a violation. Perhaps this is borderline, but nonetheless, he is taking advantage of the student who hands his paper in on time. The same is true of lab reports or other assignments which are not turned in when due. It is such violations, seemingly minor, which if allowed to continue could lead to the degradation and decadence of our honor code.

All veterinary students are given a copy of the honor code in the first weeks of their freshman year. Many of these are probably misplaced and never read. We could all contribute to the effectiveness of the honor system by keeping a copy within reach and thoroughly reading through it upon occasion. In this way, we would maintain a working knowledge of this important document.