1967

A Chat with the Dean

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"I am a crusader for effective college teaching," exclaimed Dean Kitchell in a recent conversation. The following discussion seeks to define the Dean's direct concern for the student and a few of his philosophies on education.

Dean-Student Relationship

Beginning in the fall quarter of 1966, Dean Kitchell conducted a course in freshman orientation, the purpose being to give the Veterinary Medical student an awareness of the broad opportunities available in the profession. The Dean hopes to enlarge the first year student's total concept of Veterinary Medicine.

Dean Kitchell has notebooks (within arm's reach from his desk) containing a picture of each freshman student and his application form. In "lunch with the Dean" sessions, the freshman students in groups of ten met with Dean Kitchell during the fall quarter.

Personal information about the officers of the Student Chapter of the A.V.M.A. and class representatives are also included in the notebook. The Dean meets with this group of students at weekly intervals throughout the school year.

Dean Kitchell's interest in the student does not stop at the undergraduate level. He participated in a series of seminars presented fall quarter concerning the graduate student-major professor relationship. The Dean believes that his contacts with the students are enlarging the scope of communication between the administration and the student.

Dean-Teaching Philosophy

Dean Kitchell is very concerned about students who fail to pass courses in Veterinary Medicine. He believes the formula for being a successful student is: aptitude times motivation equal productivity. The Dean feels that a student admitted to the college of Veterinary Medicine should possess the aptitude, whereas, proper motivation comes from the student realizing the need of the knowledge being presented to be a better veterinarian. "The fear of failing is a poor stimulus for learning," declared the Dean. Dr. Kitchell believes that increased student productivity will only come with better motivation by the instructor, not by the scare technique.
For an instructor to motivate a student, "A teacher must possess knowledge of subject matter and ability to communicate," states Dean Kitchell. He maintains that superior instructors must be recognized and rewarded (salary). This is the job primarily of the department head in consultation with the Dean. In this manner excellent quality staff members will be developed and not be lured away from Iowa State University.

Along with motivating the students, the Dean believes instructors should give a student who is doing poorly every opportunity of improving his performance through careful counsel. Once a student is admitted to the College of Veterinary Medicine, he should be given every advantage to prove himself before being denied the opportunity of becoming a Veterinarian.

Complete Faculty Utilization for Student Education

"The day of the one-man course has almost ended in Veterinary Medicine," the Dean explained. In many instances, one individual should only set the pattern for a particular course and then pull in strength (specialists) when available. These specialists could be clinicians, researchers and extension staff knowledgeable in a specific area. Consequently, all department personnel can be utilized in a teaching capacity at their peak advantage.

The above information illustrates a few of the philosophies of Dean Kitchell. As these philosophies (and others) are developed and disseminated, the students, faculty and alumni of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University must react with an attitude that improving the educational system is of primary importance. A willingness must exist to examine the issues through free discussion during all stages.