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Iowa State University

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Going to Veterinary School at I.S.U.
50 years ago:
Some recollections of 1938

A. R. Packer, DVM, PhD*

The recent Golden Anniversary publication of The Veterinary Student prompts a recall on the part of those of us who were in school in 1938. As a second year student in that year one now asks what has changed and what has remained the same? I will try to describe the college of that day and time leaving comparisons to each reader based on his/her knowledge of the present.

Physical Facilities

From 1912 to 1938 all classes, including clinics, were held in the Veterinary Quadrangle. The "new" Stange Memorial Clinic located across the street north of the Quad had been completed during 1937. Members of the class of 1938 were the first class to complete their clinical training in the new building. The increased space for small animal kennels, box stalls for large animals, clinical and post-mortem pathology laboratories, and offices for clinic faculty were among the important extended facilities. Room for enlarged and improved radiologic services was provided for but not fully equipped until later. The clinic space vacated in the Quad permitted the expansion of the Anatomy Department and provided a "studio" for the work of sculptor Christian Peterson. The Gentle Doctor, the Bas Relief depicting the work of the Veterinarian, and many other art pieces were created by him in a group of horse stalls in the southwest corner of the old clinic.

Students

The graduating class of 1938 numbered 48. It was the fourth class to be entered under the 1 year preveterinary requirement. The first was the class of 1935 which comprised only 15 members compared to 61 in the class of 1934. The Veterinary Student Body totaled 179 in 1938. Sixteen states were represented with 110 Iowans, 22 from Minnesota, 20 from Illinois, 6 from Nebraska and 5 from Missouri. The other 16 students were from 11 different states. Thirty-four were sons of veterinarians. For the entering class for the Fall of 1939, 64 students were selected from 139 applications. The classes were all male in those days except for the first two women graduates of the Veterinary College. These two were staff members who took courses on a part-time basis over several years. They were Margaret Sloss, Class of 1938, and M. Lois Calhoun who finished in 1939. It would be 1964 before the next woman, Dr. Phyllis Beck, would graduate.

One of the differences between students then and now is in varsity sports. In the late 30's many Veterinary Students competed in intercollegiate athletics. Varsity athletes which come to mind include:

**Football**
- Don Theophilus '36
- "Ike" Hayes '37
- Clarence Dee '39
- Rollin Rushmore '39
- Al Bowman '39
- Bob Kirkpatrick '43

**Baseball**
- Ray Gathman '37
- August Krause '37
- Bob Scott '38
- Don Radloff '39
- Al Bowman '39
- Al Packer '40

**Wrestling**
- Ralph Ruggles '83
- Frank Linn '38
- Joe Louks '43
- Jim Wilson '42

**Polo**
- John Cary '41

**Swimming**
- Al McCurdy '38

**Golf**
- Joe Sexton '42

*Dr. Packer is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus in the Department of Microbiology at the College of Veterinary Medicine.*
The curriculum followed in 1938 would be judged as basic. However, during the fourth year a student could elect as many as 15 credits of Special Problems to substitute for a like number of credits in designated courses of a more specialized nature.

Clinic classes were taken by both third and fourth year students. Third year students were scheduled 9 to 11 daily and fourth year students 9 to 12. The students rotated each week between the large and small animal sections. Third year students were assigned to a fourth year man as a 'helper' and rotated each week. Special assignments during the fourth year were ambulatory, post mortem, clinical pathology and clinic dispensary. With approximately 60 students per class and the weekly rotations, the opportunity was provided for each person to become personally well acquainted with two classes besides his own. There were no classes scheduled during the summer so many students spent their vacation gaining experience by working with a practicing veterinarian. Others took jobs hoping to earn enough money to finance their next year in school.

The clinic remained open during the summer and several students were hired to assist the clinic faculty. In addition to hourly pay, those students satisfied their clinic requirements for their fourth year. Four of these students occupied the two rooms in the clinic during the next school year and, by living-in, were responsible for night and weekend emergencies, night medications, etc.

Cost of Attending College of Veterinary Medicine

Many, probably a majority of the students, were partly or completely dependent on their own resources for financial support. These were years of the great depression, dust bowls and droughts. Needy students worked at any job available. The going rate of pay was 25-30 cents per hour. The estimated cost of a year's schooling was given in the 1935-36 catalog as $417.00 of which $118.00 was tuition.

Fees and Expenses

(Fees are subject to change without notice)

Payment of Fees: All fees must be paid on registration day at the beginning of each quarter.

Registration Fee for Undergraduates. The registration fee for undergraduates, indicated below, covers the following fixed charges: laboratory fees, hospital service, use of library, membership in the Memorial Union, and incidentals; the fee also entitles the student to admission to athletic contests, contests, concerts, lectures and debates, to subscription to the several student publications, and covers class dues of twenty-five cents a quarter.

Division of Veterinary Medicine Fall Winter Spring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$14.00</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Div. of Veterinary Med.</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$39.00</td>
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**ESTIMATE OF NECESSARY EXPENSES FOR THE AVERAGE STUDENT DURING HIS FIRST YEAR IN COLLEGE**

**Veterinary Medicine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matriculation Fee</td>
<td>$10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration Fee</td>
<td>118</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books and Supplies</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board (36 weeks)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room (36 weeks)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym. Suit and Towel Fee**</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Shoes and Belt***</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$417</td>
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</table>

Listed among the necessary expenses (see above) are those for a gym suit and for military shoes and belt. All male students were required to take 2 years of Physical Education and 2 years of Military.

**Faculty**

The faculty in 1938 numbered 25 which included 11 instructors, several of whom were also enrolled as graduate students. Seven of the 25 were Heads of Departments; in addition, one held the rank of Professor, five were Associate Professors and one an Assistant Professor. All faculty with the rank of Assistant Professor or above possessed the D.V.M. degree; there were three who also had a
Ph.D. and two had M.S. degrees in addition to their veterinary degrees.

Some of the faculty used a strict lecture format while others preferred a lecture-recitation style. Students were usually seated alphabetically in order to quickly take roll. Absences were excused by presentation of a signed slip from the College Hospital in case of illness, or from the student’s counselor.

Those instructors who asked students to recite during class carried a grade book and evaluated their response on-the-spot and entered it as the grade for the day. Sometimes students were called on randomly, and at other times it was done down the row. Overall the faculty was excellent. They were well informed and up to date in their specialized areas. Several were well known nationally and were elected to committees and offices by their peers. Two of the faculty served as AVMA presidents and others as members or chairmen of committees.

**Origin of the Veterinary Student**

In the mid-thirties a $5.00 “activity fee” which entitled the student to attend all concerts, athletic events, and a subscription to student publications was added to the registration. Students majoring in engineering received copies of the *Iowa Engineer*, those in Agriculture, *The Iowa Agriculturist*, and *The Iowa Homemaker* for Home Economics majors. There being no magazine for Veterinary students, their subscription was to the *Iowa Agriculturist*. Finding little or nothing in that publication of direct interest, they began planning for a journal of their own. Thus was born *The Veterinary Student* with Volume No. 1 published in the Fall of 1938; W.D. Daugherty, class of 1939, serving as its Editor. It was the first journal published by students in any of the veterinary schools.

**Junior Chapter of the AVMA**

Regular monthly meetings of the chapter were held September to June. The first meeting in the Fall was called a “mixer”. At this event the first and second year classes competed for a white flag secured at the top of a 15 foot greased pole. In 1938, the pole broke but the two classes were well mixed by the time of the break. Regular meetings of the chapter started with entertainment, usually musical groups, vocal instrumentalists from sororities, YMCA, student bands, glee clubs, etc.

Speakers were usually veterinarians prominent as practitioners or specialists in some field. A business session was always included except for the December Christmas program. Social events were also a part of the activities of the chapter. A Winter Formal and a Spring Sport dance plus an annual student-faculty banquet were regularly scheduled events. It was traditional that the third-year class was responsible for the Christmas program. The 1938 Christmas program put on by the 1939 class got “carried away” with skits which imitated certain faculty and staff. A faculty reprimand followed. The Christmas program the next year was as “pure as the driven snow”. The class of 1938 staged the great “Shoot-out Hoax” at the May meeting. When the lights came on after the gun shot several underclassmen had escaped through open windows and others were under the seats. The “drammer” was enacted every 4th year. Between times it was a closely guarded secret. The Spring picnic was one of the highlights of the year’s program. All classes were dismissed at 3:00 p.m. and soon class vs. class softball games began. Umpires were from the faculty. Several impromptu horseshoe courts were staked out. When the signal came that dinner was ready, Dr. Benbrook, Head of Pathology, was on hand to carve the hams with his sharp, autoclaved, post mortem knives. If the picnic was held near a body of water, several 4th year students would be dunked. Attendance at meetings was kept and “diplomas” were given to graduating seniors who had maintained satisfactory records.

During the late 30’s the College (then the Division) of Veterinary Medicine was recognized as a leader among the ten schools in the U.S. Much credit for this position was due to the leadership of Dean Stange. The graduates of Iowa State were proud of their school and took places as leaders in their communities. Many gained national prominence.
Iowa State College Veterinary Medicine Announcements 1936-1937

Pre-Veterinary Year

FALL QUARTER

General Chemistry
Chem. 101 4
Composition
Engl. 101 3
Animal Biology
Zool. 111 4
*College Algebra
Math. 101 5
Military 121 1

Credits 17

WINTER QUARTER

General Chemistry
Chem. 102 4
Composition
Engl. 102 3
Animal Biology
Zool. 112 4
*Plane Trigonometry
Math. 102A 5
Military 122 1

Credits 17

SPRING QUARTER

Qualitative Analysis
Chem. 103 4
Composition
Engl. 103 3
General Botany
Bot. 101 3
*Ind. History of U.S.
Hist. 235 3
Military 123 1

Credits 14

Curriculum in Veterinary Medicine
Leading to the Degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

FIRST YEAR

FALL QUARTER

General Anatomy
Vet. Anat. 211 6
Microscopic Anatomy
Vet. Anat. 201 5
Organic Chemistry
Chem. 174 5
Military 221 1
Physical Education 201 R

Credits 17

WINTER QUARTER

General Anatomy
Vet. Anat. 212 8
Microscopic Anatomy
Vet. Anat. 202 4
Physiological Chemistry
Chem. 175 5
Military 222 1
Physical Education 202 R

Credits 18

SPRING QUARTER

Gross Anatomy
Vet. Anat. 213 7
Microscopic Anatomy
Vet. Anat. 203 4
Animal Husbandry
A. H. 107 6
Military 223 1
Physical Education 230 R

Credits 18

SECOND YEAR

Bacteriology
Vet Hyg. 224 7
Mammalian Physiology
Vet. Phys. 264 6
General Pharmacology
Vet. Phys. 267 4

Credits 17

General Pathology
Vet. Path. 255 7
Nutritional Physiology
Vet. Phys. 265 6
Pathogenic Bacteriology
Vet. Hyg. 225 5

Credits 18

Special Pathology
Vet Path. 256 8
Mammalian Physiology
Vet. Phys. 266 6
Special Pharmacology
Vet. Phys. 268 5

Credits 19

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THIRD YEAR

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medicine</th>
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<td>Animal Parasites</td>
<td>Obstetrics</td>
<td>Vet. Surg. 373</td>
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<td>Vet. Path. 354</td>
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<td>Small Animal Medicine</td>
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FOURTH YEAR

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<td>Vet. Hyg. 422</td>
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<td>Vet. Hyg. 423</td>
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<td>Clinics</td>
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<td>Vet. Med. 481</td>
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<td>Business Law</td>
<td>Bot. 456</td>
<td>Feeds and Feeding</td>
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<td>Ex. 365</td>
<td>Vet. Path. 450</td>
<td>A. H. 416</td>
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<td>*General Genetics</td>
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<td>*Serum &amp; Vaccine Therapy</td>
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<td>Gen. 300</td>
<td>*Applied Avian Path.</td>
<td>Vet Hyg. 429</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
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†Students who have shown ability to work independently may take 5 hrs. of electives—Special Problems — instead of the courses marked by *.

*The number refers to the description of the course.

†For definition of a credit, see page 33.

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