1997

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ICN Distance Learning Classroom Fully Operational at CVM

Stephen R. Pendry

In 1995, the College of Veterinary Medicine committed to build and operate a Distance Learning Classroom in the existing television production studio of Biomedical Communications, the college's media services unit. Its immediate function is to operate as an interactive video classroom connected to the Iowa Communications Network (ICN), providing an electronic link with Iowa veterinarians in any of the ICN system's 427 classrooms throughout the state. Additionally, the system is intended to provide interactive links using ISU's satellite uplink system, and eventually via computer network-based digital communications systems. The Veterinary Medicine facility became operational in July of 1996 as ISU's fourth ICN classroom. Currently, this classroom is unique among ICN facilities in its ability to be converted back to a video production studio, and conventional videotape production has been continued between ICN commitments. Its design reflects the special needs of medical and biological subject matter, and the next phase of its development will be to build and operate a mobile cart-based origination system.

Grand Rounds Presentations

Veterinary Grand Rounds at Iowa State is a weekly, all college event. During the academic year, every member of the senior class conducts a literature review and prepares an in-depth case presentation to the faculty, staff and student body. Typically, three students present each Friday morning, and a discussion of the case follows each presentation. The quality and sophistication of Grand Rounds has improved substantially during recent years, and students are now able to display computer-generated images and 2x2 slides side by side on a double-sized screen. Videotapes of clinical cases are also projected by some students. During this academic year, 91 students will deliver presentations using the permanently installed personal computer/video projection system.

Presenting Grand Rounds via ICN

When the Veterinary ICN Classroom became operational, a longtime goal of the college was accomplished: the wealth of information presented in Grand Rounds each week could be readily delivered to veterinary practitioners and discussed in a real-time live forum. Several decisions were necessary to make this possible. Live delivery of the Friday morning series was clearly impractical for many reasons. Sessions on weeknights appeared to be the most practical for veterinarians, so Thursday nights were chosen as the regular time for The ICN Series, as it came to be called. At the beginning of fall semester, BMC began videotaping Grand Rounds presentations in the ICN classroom after they were delivered to the college; the students then attended the next Thursday evening interactive session to answer questions after the playback of their videotape. To date, over 200 individual veterinarians have participated in the 22 Thursday sessions of The ICN Series. Special programs on AMDUCA and PRRS were also produced.

Dr. Prem Paul presents a seminar in the new Distance Learning Classroom at the CVM.

Spring, 1997