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Department of Biomedical Sciences Created Through Merger of VAN and VPP

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On June 2, 1997, a proposal was sent to the Board of Regents by the Department of Biomedical Sciences Steering committee, which was chaired by Dr. Duane Enger. This proposal recommended that the Department of Veterinary Anatomy and the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology be merged into a single Department of Biomedical Sciences, and in July, the Board of Regents approved the proposal, officially merging the departments. This new department consists of 8 faculty lines from the Department of Veterinary Anatomy, and 12 faculty lines from the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology. The Department of Biomedical Sciences Steering Committee recommended that the department put "an equal value on teaching, research, and service." The committee also suggested a mission statement for the department, which reads, "The Department of Biomedical Sciences plays a primary role in the education of undergraduate, veterinary, and graduate students in physiology, pharmacology and anatomy. It develops and sustains research excellence in areas within these disciplines."

As a result of this proposal, and its approval by the Board of Regents, the departments of Veterinary Anatomy and Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology at the ISU College of Veterinary Medicine officially reside under the new title of Department of Biomedical Sciences, with Dr. Norman Cheville of the ISU Veterinary Pathology Department as its interim chair. A search committee, which is being chaired by Dr. Don Reynolds, has begun looking for a permanent chair for the department. The committee is searching worldwide for a candidate that will meet the standards of excellence for which the ISU College of Veterinary Medicine is renowned. This committee will advertise the position in national and international scientific journals to bring in the best possible candidates available. As interim chair, Dr. Cheville has several responsibilities to the department. The most important of these duties is to present the Department of Biomedical Sciences to the national scientific community "in such a way that our current strengths will be a positive force in the attraction of an internationally recognized person to the list of candidates for permanent chair." To do this, Dr. Cheville must assist in the "physical and intellectual integration (of the two departments) so that the new chair can immediately devote his or her time to move ahead with real meaningful changes." Dr. Cheville states that this merger will result in "a unit of teachers and scientists that interact as a group to enhance our educational and research efforts." This merger could also lead to changes in the curriculum that involve "integration of disciplines, problem-based learning, and use of modern audiovisual techniques to reinforce the educational process." Another reason for the merger, according to Dr. Cheville, is that with only one department there will be only one department head instead of two, and this "in theory, will allow for more faculty time devoted to education." Current veterinary students should not notice any major changes due to the merger, but Dr. Cheville hopes that in the long-term veterinary students "will experience significant changes for the better which will accrue from combining forces." If this merger lives up to expectations, future veterinary students at Iowa State will achieve an even higher level of learning excellence than is already in place.

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