**Department of Clinical Sciences Veterinary Student Mentoring Program:**

**Goals:**

1. Increase mentoring of DVM students by clinical faculty

a. Improve retention/follow-through in the student’s initially chosen field of veterinary medicine (e.g., Agricultural Practices and Equine Medicine and Surgery)

b. Increase the student’s familiarity with academic veterinary medicine

2. Increase faculty productivity

3. Provide career-relevant employment opportunities for our DVM students

**Background:**

Experiences in veterinary school may reinforce or alter the envisioned career paths of veterinary students. Most of us can look back at our formative years in veterinary school and remember one or two faculty members that had a great deal of influence on our career pathway decision. In some cases it may have been advice that we followed and in other cases it may have been a certain aspect of veterinary medicine that we found appealing as a result of the relationship we had with that faculty mentor. What made the advice valuable or the career path appealing was the relationship and respect that we had with and for the faculty person. Providing an opportunity for veterinary students to work with a faculty member in their envisioned career area of veterinary medicine may encourage students to “stay on track”.

Although the demands of academia are great, our faculty have a true passion for each of the “hats” they wear in their academic position. Affording students the opportunity to work closely with a faculty member, one-on-one, will facilitate sharing this passion. Each of us has seen first hand how rewarding it can be when a student decides to pursue postgraduate training based, at least in part, on the relationship we’ve had with them. Attracting the best and brightest in each class into all areas of academic veterinary medicine is important for the future.

From a faculty viewpoint, one of the most frustrating aspects of being on clinics is the reality that your time is not your own. Being responsive to students, patients, clients, house officers, reception desk personnel, beepers and telephones does not allow one to devote time to any other aspects of his/her job (e.g., lecture preparation and research) when they are on clinic duty. Having a consistent part-time employee would have the potential to increase and improve both the faculty member’s clinical service and academic productivity. For example, each of us has experienced the benefits of being able to focus on clinical teaching and service knowing that productivity in other areas is continuing via the efforts of a student worker.

**Methods:**

Funding will be provided to DCS faculty to hire a student for one or two semesters and/or a summer based on an approved proposal. DCS faculty would submit proposals that address the following points:

1. How the faculty person has selected or will go about selecting a student for the program
2. Description of the project(s) or type of work the student will perform
3. Proposed methods of career mentoring of the veterinary student
4. Resources that the faculty member provide to help support the student
5. Planned budget and timeline, proposals are approved for a 1-year project. If the mentoring experience is intended to last greater than 1 year, this should be included in the planned timeline, an annual update will be requested for reporting purposes.

Preference will be given to proposals that fulfil the following criteria:

1) demonstrate a good match of faculty person to student based on student interest,

2) seek to initially employ first or second year veterinary students,

3) have a high likelihood of increasing faculty productivity,

4) have a well thought out plan for student mentoring, and

5) are supported to some degree by faculty resources. Continued funding (e.g., over the summer or for additional semesters) would be provided based on a short summary report from both the faculty member and the student that demonstrates the original goals have been accomplished as well as an updated plan for the next cycle. Initially hiring first and second year students will provide continuity for the faculty member if the student continues to be employed during their third and fourth years in school.