

PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Summary progress report of Program Review cycle 2017 - 2022
Veterinary Science

1. Enhance development/fundraising efforts by hiring an Equine Philanthropist and by other means.

Assessment method: The department receives regular reports providing quantitative data on the number of philanthropic-related visits, solicitations, and donations received. These reports are provided by the philanthropy office and presented by the Equine Philanthropy Director to the Chair. Assessments are based on analyses of these data.

Results: Ms Danielle Jostes continues to provide leadership on equine-related philanthropy for the Department of Veterinary Science, working closely with the Gluck Equine Research Foundation Board and its chairman, Dr. Stuart Brown. Ms Jostes' position is shared with UK-Ag Equine Programs and she continues to assist that program with their fund raising efforts. Ms Patsy Garrett serves as the administrative assistant for Ms Jostes' position.

Analysis of results and reflection: Ms Jostes has established an excellent working relationship with Dr. Stuart Brown, Chairman of the Gluck Equine Research Foundation Board of Directors, and Mr. Dermott Ryan, Chair of the GERF philanthropy committee.

Ongoing improvement actions: The department will continue to expand philanthropic initiatives. We will continue to strive to improve communication and relationships with stakeholders and potential benefactors. To bolster our communication efforts, the faculty have approved a position for an Asst./Assoc. Professor in Equine Veterinary Outreach.

2. Over the imminent period of faculty turnover, replace faculty while maintaining emphasis on the horse.

Assessment method: Review current plans for faculty recruitment and job descriptions to ensure that they reflect the expectations of the program for new faculty hires.

Results: During the overall period since our last periodic review, 12 new faculty members have been hired, including three endowed chairs. We have an ongoing search for the Clay Endowed Chair in Equine Reproduction, and we have initiated a search for an Asst./Assoc. Professor in Equine Reproduction. The faculty have approved a position for an Asst./Assoc. Professor in Equine Veterinary Outreach.

Analysis of results and reflection: The recruitment of these faculty has allowed our department to continue to provide the vital research and service activities that support the equine industry of this state.

Ongoing improvement actions: Recently, four faculty members have retired (or started phased retirement) from this department (Drs. Ball, Carter, Horohov and Timoney). The process for recruiting the next Albert Clay Chair in Equine Reproduction (Dr. Ball's position) is underway. Similarly, a search for the next Department Chair and Director of the Gluck Center is ongoing. With the phased retirement of Dr. Craig Carter, the next Director of the UKVDL will need to be identified. Decisions for strategic use of the Schlaikjer (Horohov) and van Lennep (Timoney) Endowed Chairs in equine infectious disease will also need to be discussed. To aid the department in these decisions, a retreat is planned for November 2022 to discuss the future directions of the department in terms of faculty recruitment, student support and facilities.

3. Provide competitive startup packages for the new faculty hires, including funds for renovation of laboratory facilities, and modernization of equipment at GERC.

Assessment method: Review current practices and plans going forward to provide competitive start-up packages.

Results: As noted above, multiple new faculty members have been hired during the overall period of review. The two most recent faculty hires utilized start-up packages that came from a combination of college and unit funds. In the case of the Wright-Markey Endowed Chair position, the endowment account was used to provide start-up funding for Dr. Goehring. A generous donation from the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association provided support for laboratory renovations for the Wright-Markey Chair. In the case of the pathologist position, UKVDL funds were the source of the start-up package.

Analysis of results and reflection: Our start-up packages have been competitive. These funds provide the new faculty with the means to establish their research program and support their efforts to procure external funding for their programs. For endowed chair positions, the saved distribution funds in the endowment can be used for this purpose. Non-endowed positions will require other sources of funding.

Ongoing improvement actions: Identification of new faculty start-up funding remains a priority for the department. As new positions in the department are developed, there will be discussions with the Associate Deans for Research (Dr. Matthews) and Finance (Susan Campbell) to help identify start-up funds. As well, funds from the Gluck Equine Research Foundation can be set aside for new faculty start-up packages.

4. Improve farm infrastructure and increase staffing at farms.

Assessment method: Periodic review by the Departmental Animal Resources Advisory Committee in consultation with the Animal Resources Manager and, where appropriate, the individual farm managers.

Results: We continue to strive for ways to improve the efficiency of our farm operations. This includes new fence lines, 5 new animal shelters, and the creation of multiple new feed pad areas. Furthermore, barns have been painted and renovated. The number of horses on North Farm has been stabilized at 206 head. The adoption of a rotating work schedule has helped to provide adequate coverage while minimizing cost. A new isolation facility has been established on North Farm to replace the aging facility at the South Farm.

Analysis of results and reflection: Ms. Courtney Lawson serves as the animal resources manager and works closely with the Chair of the Department and the Chair of the Animal Resource Committee to develop a strategy for renovations, increased staffing, and equipment replacement for the farms. Stabilization and reduction of the number of horses has facilitated budget planning and thus allowed animal care costs to remain fixed and competitive, thus enabling faculty to accurately project animal costs for grants and contracts.

Ongoing improvement actions: The chair of the Animal Resource Committee schedules regular meetings with those faculty using animals on the farm to develop operational plans and overall strategies for our farms.

5. Maintain horse breeding programs for general purpose herds as well as specialty herds (i.e., geriatric, parasitology, and viral arteritis).

Assessment method: Periodic review by the Departmental Animal Resources Advisory Committee in consultation with the Animal Resources Manager.

Results: The specialty herds of geriatric horses and parasitology horses are currently being supported and maintained in part by the efforts of Dr. Amanda Adams and Dr. Martin Nielsen. Dr. Adams has recently received a significant gift which will be utilized to defray some of the costs of her herd. As part of this gift, consideration has been given to expanding the research laboratory space at the Orin Little Research Farm and establishing an education center for the aged horse. A fundraiser secured significant funding for Dr. Nielsen's parasitology herd, and these efforts will continue. Dr. Nielsen has recently submitted a grant to an NSF program supporting biological collections. Breeding decisions for the general herd on based on anticipated needs for foals and young horses in close collaboration with faculty.

Analysis of results and reflection: Continuing efforts are needed to address the goal of securing funding for farm support. The Animal Resources Advisory Committee will work with the Chair and Danielle Jostes to develop a strategy for soliciting funding for this effort.

Ongoing improvement actions: The Animal Resources Advisory Committee will work with faculty to develop a mechanism for breeding decisions as well as for developing a process for getting horses off the farm in order to successfully maintain the general research herd of horses.

6. Facilitate financial transactions of VDL with GERC and other units at UK, in order to better synergize VDL with the VSC research program.

Assessment method: Review current practices and discuss with the director of the VDL, his business manager and financial staff from the GERC and the College.

Results: A process for direct accounting of UKVDL resources and time has been implemented.

Analysis of results and reflection: To date, the approach has proven successful.

Ongoing improvement actions: We will continue to review current practices for facilitating financial transactions between VDL and GERC faculty.

7. Consider mechanisms to expand teaching opportunities for graduate students and postdocs.

Assessment method: The Director of Graduate Studies and graduate program assistant will send periodic email requests for information to monitor graduate student and postdoctoral student teaching activities.

Results: Veterinary Science graduate students continue to participate in teaching activities whenever possible. We have negotiated two TA positions which will be used to recruit and support two graduate students to this program. Furthermore, through a recent Equine Programs initiative, several teaching opportunities requiring lesser time commitments are now being provided to graduate students on an overload basis.

Analysis of results and reflection: The two TA positions provided by the college will provide partial support for two of our students who will assist with the instruction of Equine Science and Management courses.

Ongoing improvement actions: In addition to these two TA positions, the faculty will be encouraged to devise student teaching opportunities within their own courses and in courses taught by colleagues in other departments. The Department Chair and DGS will work with the Associate Dean for Instruction and the Chair of Animal and Food Sciences to develop a strategy for providing teaching assistantship tuition waivers to VS graduate students in return for serving as teaching assistants in Equine Science and Management courses.

8. Explore the possibility of expanding the definition of the “Gluck Equine Center” to allow affiliations of others in Equine Programs and beyond.

Assessment method: Discussions have been ongoing within the department but were stalled during the CoVID shutdown. However, these will continue going forward.

Results: There have been continued discussions at monthly faculty meetings and a number of action items were developed including a plan to meet with directors of other centers within the university. While a meeting was planned for this, it was postponed due to the CoVID-19 situation.

Analysis of results and reflection: There are still questions and concerns among many of the faculty regarding this possibility. Many of these concerns are in regards to the future financial and operational relationship between the “Gluck Center” and the Department of Veterinary Science. To address these concerns, it was proposed that other center directors be asked to provide their perspective on these same relationship issues between their center and the participating departments. However, since this meeting had to be postponed, no further action was possible.

Ongoing improvement actions: Invitations will again be extended to the Directors of several university centers to meet with the faculty. A list of specific questions was developed and will be shared with each of the directors prior to their visit to enhance these discussions.

9. Explore ways to foster a culture of inclusiveness of all sectors of the department including GERC, AGTRL and VDL affiliates, encompassing all missions including research, teaching, and service. Take steps to enhance communication between cohorts in the department (office staff, technical staff, students, postdocs), for example by including representatives of each group in regular departmental meetings.

Assessment method: Efforts are continuing to expand the communication efforts amongst faculty, staff, and students. Social activities are also planned to foster a better sense of community. Feedback from the @Work survey will be used to assess the effectiveness of these measures

Results: The CoVID-19 situation resulted in a prohibition of planned social activities. The annual department BBQ was canceled. We were also unable to hold farewell parties for those faculty and staff who retired. While Zoom-related activities were initiated in some cases, these proved less than satisfactory. In the fall semester of 2022, we had the department BBQ for the first time in three years, and a planned department retreat will serve another important social role. The new graduate students have been welcomed with a luncheon and a 3MT competition was recently completed for the students.

Analysis of results and reflection: The CoVID-19 situation severely hampered our efforts in this area. Zoom and other methods proved less effective for department communication and engagement. In-person activities are considered far more engaging.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continue to expand and add in-person social activities back to the calendar.

10. The department should appoint a committee to determine whether there is a need to clarify the Statement of Evidences for merit evaluation and promotion as it applies to Clinical Title Series Faculty.

Assessment method: A committee was formed to improve the Statements of Evidence for evaluation and promotion of clinical title series faculty

Results: The University rules for evaluation of clinical title series faculty provides considerable latitude and limited specific directions to departments for evaluation of Clinical Title Series faculty. The department rules likewise provide wide latitude. The job descriptions of the current clinical title series faculty include a diverse range of duties and responsibilities for each position.

Analysis of results and reflection: More specific guidelines are needed.

Ongoing improvement actions: The job descriptions for current faculty in this title series are now being considered as specific Statements of Evidence.

11. Provide a more comprehensive graduate student handbook.

Assessment method: The Veterinary Science graduate student populace was polled to assess their satisfaction with the updated graduate program guide.

Results: Based on input from the Veterinary Science graduate student populace (solicited and conveyed by the departmental grad student representative) and from the department's Curriculum and Teaching Committee, the graduate program guide has been revised and expanded. Updates were made, and further information regarding course and degree requirements was added to the document. Additionally, two appendices were incorporated into the guide (Veterinary Science Research Assistantships: Conditions of Appointment and the Association of American Medical College's Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors).

Analysis of results and reflection: The revision has yielded a more complete and informative guide for graduate students in our program.

Ongoing improvement actions: The graduate program guide should not be considered a static document, so we will continue to seek periodic input from VS graduate students and faculty for updates and improvements to the guide.

12. Increase external communication/public dissemination efforts

Assessment method: A group of social media ambassadors were appointed to help share information about the department on social media.

Results: Holly Wiemers has become further involved in our social media and communication efforts. Efforts to increase faculty participation are ongoing. University guidelines and regulations regarding the use of social media were discussed at a faculty meeting. We have recently updated and improved the web page and related materials. Gluck-related news stories are regularly posted on the Gluck Facebook page.

Analysis of results and reflection: While some faculty members are engaged in this process, it has not been embraced by the full faculty. Efforts are underway to encourage additional participation.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continue to encourage faculty participation in our external communication efforts. Assure that all external communications, especially social media, meet all university regulations.